



ISSUE 28 NOV/DEC 2001

£3.75

LITTLE WHITE LIES

Truth & Movies

THE
WHERE
THE
WILD
THINGS
ARE
ISSUE



A stylized black and white illustration of a forest. Tall, thin tree trunks are the primary vertical elements. Various small, detailed silhouettes of animals and plants are scattered throughout the scene. In the upper left, a large yellow circle represents the sun or moon. In the upper right, a crescent moon and several small stars are visible. The overall style is graphic and minimalist.

**“I WANT YOU
TO BE KING
FOREVER,
MAX.”**

shop
in the
winter
which were
where
the wild
things are

Breaching through the folded filmmaking class of '90, Spike Jonze did everything but dance up in a well-run to prove that he was an original. *Wild Thing*. Popped in the firm of genre publishing, alone and music videos, Jonze reflected a new American aesthetic that combined archness, innuendo and youthful energy with an intricate feel for the loud power of film.

Born, John McLeach, emerged fully formed from the surreal teen space of Jonze and screenwriter Charlie Kaufman. Electric and elusive, with it Jonze graduated from the MTV gumball machine behind the door and the Beanie Boys, merging the sensibilities of serious, misanthropic with style-conscious modernism and intellectual snigger.

Three years later, Jonze and Kaufman produced *Adaptation*, whose narrative psychodrama drained the final little boundaries of conventional filmmaking.

But that was then. Seven years have passed. Seven years in which the class of '90 – the likes of *Wes Anderson*, *Sofia Coppola*, *Quentin Tarantino* and *Tim Anderson* – have evolved in their different ways. But while his contemporaries have suffered their stings and arrows, Jonze has been cautiously aloof.

It was in that silence that an adaptation of *Maurice Sendak's Where The Wild Things Are* gestated. The story of Max, a young boy sent to his bedroom with no supper who journeys across the sea to the land of the Wild Things, it was published in 1963, earned a Caldecott Medal and has since taken up residence in any list of the best-selling kids books of all time.

The book has been cited by a succession of filmmakers tempted not just by its high profile but by the rich possibilities for translation to the screen. Until now the story's economy and maturity have defeated

them all, but given the childlike quality evident in Jonze's classic cinematic worlds, it was not like the material had finally fallen into the hands of the perfect director.

Sendak certainly thinks so – giving his blessing to the project for the first time. And why wouldn't he? Looking back at Jonze's previous films there are thematic parallels between the work of the two men. Sendak intended his *Wild Things* to arrive not just as traditional cartoon movies but as physical manifestations of Max's emotions. Published two years after the death of *Carl Jung*, it is no coincidence that *Where The Wild Things Are* brings the realm of the unconscious to life. For Sendak, it was also a form of art therapy – another Jungian concept – capable of expressing the feelings of trauma and obsession that haunted him in secret for most of his life.

Jonze, alongside Charlie Kaufman, has also flirted with visualizing the unconscious. Whether getting into the literal head-space of a former actor in *Being John Malkovich*, or physically dismantling the much-lamented personality of a screenwriter in *Adaptation*, he's been able to bring a literate light pop-cultural proclivity to Kaufman's complex philosophical psychoses.

So here we are, five years later, smart-bested and lovin' it with anticipation. Because this isn't the usual Spike Jonze plot. Whether casually screwing the pop promo, making shyly subversive ads or chucking Hollywood's pubic. Jonze has always made it look easy. He stole out of leftfield, spending creative capital rather than studio cash. He made films with tight-knit crews and guerrilla energy like was quick and sharp and spontaneous. **3P**

WHEN FOLLOWING MAX'S HARUM-SCARUM FLIGHT FROM HOME, OR THE WILD RAMPAGE IN THE NG SOUNDTRACK, THE FILM LODGES ITSELF IN SOME POST-CONSCIOUS PART OF THE BRAIN AND SENDS OUT PURE BOLTS OF CINEMATIC BLISS.

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**A COMBINATION
OF PUPPETRY,
PERFORMANCE
AND CGI, THE
WILD THINGS
ARE A TECHNICAL
MARVEL... AN
ELEGANT ASSEMBLY
OF ENGINEERING
AND ART.**

What happens when you bring that fascination into the audio system, where the answer to any question is counted in dollars (twenty million of them in this case)? What happens when he's in charge of production with a crew of over 400 people, where every thing that he wants to happen has to be planned out over a series of months? What happens when he answers to his producers, four executive producers and three separate film units?

The answer, perhaps inevitably, isn't straightforward. Because for all that *Where The Wild Things Are* is a tale of the exuberance, love, fear and longing of childhood, it is also an unruly conflict, a turbulent teenager of a film. It's a film of occasionally transcendent highs that nevertheless create scenes of disappointment in the gut. It's a film that you'll desperately want to love. But won't.

At its best, *Jonas* is a film located within the dark heart of childhood, a meeting place of loneliness and confusion. Max – brilliantly played by

Max Records – is a combination of homesick, free-spirited and fearful introspection – is a child on the cusp of change. His single mother Catherine (Kerstin Benson) has a new boyfriend, while his sister is drifting away into adolescence. Left alone, he's gripped by separation anxiety and a sense of betrayal. At school, he learns that one day the sun will die too, and as this ultimate cosmic abandonment takes shape in Max's fragile sense of reality, his paranoia morphs into existential dread. In other words, he dons a wolf costume, loses his room and runs away.

In a mansion agitated by a shift in light and season, Max is transferred to the land of the *Wild Things* – just creates caught in a primal cycle of evasion and distraction, the embodiment of a nine-year-old's often-violent worldview. A combination of puppetry, performance and CGI, the *Wild Things* are a technical marvel. Designed by artist Sonya Geramova, they were constructed by Jim Henson's Creature Shop in

LA, while the voice, accompanied two actors performing a live-stage version of the script. Puppet actors then worked the suits on set in Australia before CGI features were overlaid to add an extra layer of expressiveness.

The final effect is an elegant assembly of engineering and art – the *Wild Things* of *Jonas* is a creature of the imagination, a creature of the heart and the hand work of actors and experts. Their very weight and physicality prove crucial to the emotional resonance that makes the story tick. They run and leap and fight and howl with a menacing, but paradoxically otherworldly nuance, with a history written into their bodies in snapped twigs, goaded horns and created fur.

Jonas and cinematographer Lance Acord show them in natural light, reflecting the fact that childhood isn't the primary-colored paradise of Disney, but a world of busy sunlight and hidden shadows. Rather than making the *Wild Things* within their surroundings, it's Max's troubled and unworldly way

home life that begins to look like the fantasy world.

There's also, perhaps, in this hermetic kingdom of the imagination a comment on filmmaking itself. Max and the *Wild Things* build a fort – another physical symbol of their inner feelings – where "only the things that you want to happen" happen. But as this fort is metaphorically and literally destroyed from within by a petty possession of lies, compromises and disappointments, it's hard not to see it as an unsettling reflection of the filmmaking process. Just like the *Wild Things* themselves, *Jonas* is a book waiting to be read, and in *Jonas* it found the wildest one of all, but even that ultimately hasn't proved enough to offset the years of frustrations, studio arguments, technical hitches and disastrous test screenings.

Because at the same time that *Jonas* lifts us out of the comfort zone of traditional kids film, a nagging sense of familiarity keeps us grounded. The film's tension between domesticity and wildness is never convincingly

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No one who, like me, conjures up the
most evil of these half-formed demons
that inhabit the human breast and needs
to wrangle with them can expect to come
through the struggle unscathed.

Sigmund Freud, *Dora:
An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* (1905)

Chapter I How I met Witch Hysteria and how I became a survivor



Lydia:

What is it you love about movies?

Spike Jonze:

What I think about it, it's creativity that inspires me. When somebody makes something that I can get lost in. You know, when it sort of captures my imagination. And I just think about the feeling I had when I saw Maurice Sendak's books and, you know, there's a sequence where the little kid falls out of bed and he falls through the floor and through the ceiling of the next floor and through the ceiling of the next floor... And then he falls out of his pajamas and he lands in the big thing of dough. Like when I first saw Michel Gondry's videos. I'd started directing videos and I kept seeing videos with his name on them. And after a few of them, I said, 'Who is this guy?' There was just magic there, like the Björk 'Human Behaviour' video or the Rolling Stones video or the Massive Attack video. The same with Chris Cunningham when I saw his videos. Just anything that feels like, you know... Like somebody's just... That is just... Making something that I can just fall into. You're just consumed with it.



"A GYMNASIUM FOR THE IMAGINATION
VERY, VERY FUNNY..."



— LITTLE WHITE LIES

"A WILDLY IMAGINATIVE
SLICE OF OFFBEAT COMEDY"

— HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"LIKE NOTHING YOU'LL
SEE ALL YEAR - BRILLIANT"

— KIRK WAGNER, THE NEW YORK TIMES

"VISUALLY INVENTIVE AND
ENTIRELY ORIGINAL"

— GLOBE ONLINE

"GLEEFULLY ECCENTRIC"

— THE TIMES



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HERE BE MONSTERS

September was the launch of our first *Little White Lies* creative bid, to design a brand new cover inspired by *Where the Wild Things Are*. We were blown away by hundreds of astonishing entries, and found it near impossible to whittle them down to just 15. Congratulations to Deborah that her brilliant winning entry which begs her a signed autograph of our poet. Shoutout exclusively to *Little White Lies* by Geoff Mollenhagen, designer of the title sequence and end credits graphics for *Spidee Jones's Where the Wild Things Are*.

L-R: 1. Deborah Holts 2. Dan Cullen 3. Alex Woodhead 4. Ben Mills
5. Kelly Twining 6. John Hughes 7. Lesley Barnes 8. Roy Eas Beal 9. Karolin Schwaner
10. Karolin Hudson 11. Lindsay Higgins 12. Splendid Hand 13. Sherry Onah





Chapter
Three is
the
distances
in a
winter
interest
inspired
by a feature
film

The Sharp End of Spike!

With his anarchic creativity and powder-keg subversion, his reconstruction and self-reflexion, Spike Jonze is buried deep within our pop culture dreams.



Into The Wild

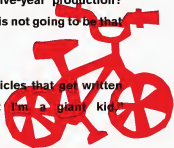
Spike Jonze grants
us a glimpse into his
extraordinary world.

Words by
Jonathan Crocker




Spike Jonze sits on a chair with his knees drawn up around his chin. He's wearing a jacket and tie but his shirt is hanging out and he's rocking sneakers. He's been speaking to journalists for three days. He knows all the questions by heart now. What were you like as a child? When did you first read *Where The Wild Things Are*? Will you tell us about the film's troubled five-year production? He doesn't know this is not going to be that kind of interview.

"Yeah, I think the articles that get written right now are that I'm a giant kid."



he anticipates as we begin. "But I think that's just because the movie I made is about childhood. The last two movies I made weren't about childhood. So I didn't get that article written. I got 'Being Spike Jonze' a lot on my first movie."

Adam Spiegel got his nickname while working in a BMX store. But by the time you read this, 'Spike Jonze' will be 40. He's spent the last 20 years as film's maverick hipster, whisking gonzo brilliance from TV shows, commercials, music, skate vids and movies. Free, playful and self-reflexive, both the work and its creator demand and then defy analysis. 

Hi, My Name is Adam

Director, producer, studio head and skate boss – keeping up with the Jonze is no easy deal.

Words by ADAM LEE DAVIES



Adam Spiegel, Richard Corliss, Conrad Vig. Just who is Spike Jonze? Director, skateboarder, punk, studio head, therapist, dancer, media mogul. For once, the much debated whether 'renaissance man' just doesn't quite cover it.

From gangster to *Carson Kressley* from Joe Corney and drunken daisies to stretch blouses and Kentucky waterfalls – Spike Jonze has it all. Any attempt to map out his labyrinthine topography would be like catching lightning in a bottle, so take a deep breath and a pinch of salt while we sketch out the outlines of his major concerns.

The Board of Directors

Jonze has created some of the most iconic, stylish and innovative skateboard videos of all time. His first film, 1991's *Moles* (aka for *Black Skateboards*), is shot through with the exuberance of youth, shards of early morning Californian sunshine and a nascent directorial flair.

Featuring a young, spunky Jonze Lee, it captures the blind crew getting way gloriously drunk in the day and is still an influence on boarders nearly 20 years later. Its 2004 come for chocolate for *Chocolate Skateboards* – like *Rollerball* meets *On The Run* – and an explosive ad for Luke Footwear that suggests if he ever tires of directing funny existential puzzles, Jonze could make a decent living helming ball-out action flicks.

Towering over all else, however, is the film he made for his own *Girl Skateboards* troupe in 2000. Co-directed with Ig Gonsky, *Yeah Right* features scads of action, some clever women's history, a pinch of games across tabular and a city cameo from semi-pro Jonze best-of-the Owen Wilson. Andrew Kurland, editor of *Roller* magazine, maintains that *Yeah Right* is "imprinted in people's minds as one of the most preposterous turning points in skate culture." "J!"

Studio Chief

Created by Jamie, Michael Gandy and Chris Cunningham, the Directors Label was launched in 2003 to huge acclaim. Data-bred by Chris Blackwell's Palm Pictures, the label's initial three DVD releases collected together music videos, adverts and other general goodness from this golden triumvirate's respective careers.

Gandy's set rounds up some of his best music vids and also looks back on the loopy short *Phantom* from 2003, in which a pyromaniac, fire-breathed Jim Carrey drives around LA at night in a bedrock hybrid. Cunningham's DVD features selections of his art installations alongside disarming collaborations with avant-garde tech-punks in Aplex Two.

Spiker's volume collects his music videos for the Beanie Boys, Björk and The Chemical Brothers as well as his short documentary about would-be rodeo riders, *Amorita* (1999), *Morning* (1998) and *Torance Rides* (1999), a mock-noir doc chronicling Richard Gaddy and the fictional Torance Community Dance Group featured in Jamie's endearingly lo-fi 'These You' video for Farfey Slim.

Further volumes featuring the work of Angus Gough and Jonathan Glazer hit shelves in 2005, and there are plans for new releases covering Hammer & Tong (aka *Son of Sledge*) director Gorky Jansz (ag), Jonas Åkerlund and Roman Coppola.

We Love You Long Time

The blogosphere is a demanding mistress. Without commitment, wit and constant vigilance, you are can become as stagnant and meandering as a river of unhot shit. Happily, the blog that Jamie set up to chart the artistic development of *Where The Wild Things Are* – www.weloveyoulongtime.com – is fresh, entertaining and buzzing with ideas. When you're packed in to as many creative grids as Jamie, the joint is always going to be prepping

As well as offering a loose-leaf approximation of the content of work and creativity that goes into the making of a modern movie, *weloveyoulongtime* highlights the designers, artists and general gooballs that have inspired Spike over the long gestation of the film.

For every article on the development of children's fiction through the twentieth century there's a video of the *Strawhead*

flowing their handworking editing couch into the slup, while a piece on the lost art of letter writing is sweetly followed up by one detailing the dating '70s Polaroid art of Lucie Samaras.

At the time of writing the latest entry was a link howling alien-on-wall suits based on the Wild Things costumes. Freaky, scary and frankly rather worrying, they're entirely in keeping with author Maurice Sendak's weird and woolly world.

Publish, Or Be Damned

Starting with his work as a photographer for slick-trick BMX rag *Freemag* in the late '80s, Jamie has always devoted a good deal of his attention to magazines.

In 1988, alongside Andy Jenkins and Mark Lawrence – the other members of his BMX-wrecking crew Club Homeboy – Jamie created the magazine *Homeboy*, a short-lived assemblage of news, jokes, bontis and creative photography. But followed in the early '90s a boys' only version of cult proto-Girl Power teen-zine *mag* *Sassy*, it managed only seven spiky, sporadic issues but still sent men of a certain age into misty-eyed reverie.

Jamie also managed a stint on the Beanie Boys' legendary *Grand Royal Magazine* – the first few issues of which were a sensation when they first saw the light of day in the early '90s. Still highly collectible, the *mag* is now perhaps best remembered for spilling an ironic obscenity with the reader (the lamby, not the baby that went on to saturate the internet).

Girl, You'll Be A Woman Soon

Jamie ensured his place in the flip-trick freemag world, in 1993, along with action sports luminaries Mike Carroll and Rick Howard, he co-founded the Girl Skateboards company. A creative force for some time now, Girl's bread and butter has always been in making the actual bits of wood you stand on, but they have long since diversified into cloning out all manner of bass wheels, fly accessories and rail clippers.

With a logo based on the 'ladies' bathroom sign, Girl specialises in celebrity-endorsed boards that feature bold, colourful and ever so slightly deranged designs that currently range from bloused-out sayers and cocking

spiders to willowy pencil sketches of poses and cartoons of disabled DAFs being pushed down stairwells.

But although they are major players in the hugely lucrative skate world and have a range of Wild Things special editions in store, the Girl boys are fairly laid back when it comes to marketing. "From this side of the fence they always seem content with just doing their thing and never pushing themselves onto the masses," says Hack's Andrew Kurland. "I guess they understand that if you're into what they're about, you'll seek them out for yourself."

In October, New York's Museum of Modern Art presented a Jamie retrospective celebrating his work as director, producer, cinematographer, writer, actor, choreographer and sometime stuntman' entitled *Spike Jamie The First 80 Years*. It's an appropriate name for an exhibition about a man who has packed more into his last 39 years than many of us would manage in 39 lifetimes. 🍌





BRIGHT LIGHTS, LOST SOULS...

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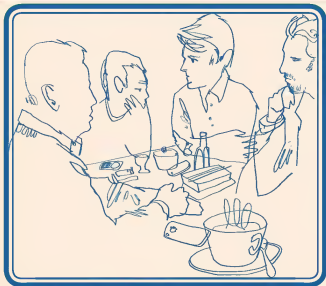
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Words by
Matt Bochenski

Drawings by
Paul Willoughby



THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!

It's the place where Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry and Garth Jennings served their filmmaking apprenticeships. And yet the advertising industry has a reputation for anti-creative commercialism. LWLies was offered rare access to cutting-edge ad company Mother to find out how that is about to change.

If anyone here is in advertising or marketing, kill yourself. Just a little thought, I'm just trying to plant seeds. Maybe one day they'll take root. I don't know. You by You do what you can. Kill yourselves. Seriously though, if you are... oh. No really, there's no rehabilitation for what you do, and you are Satan's little helpers, okay? Kill yourselves, seriously. You're the owner of all things good. Seriously, no, this is not a joke. There's no fucking joke coming. You are Satan's spawn filling the world with hate and garbage. You are fucked and you are fucking us. Kill yourselves, it's the only way to save your fucking soul! Kill yourself, kill yourself, kill yourself now.

American comedian [Bill Hicks](#) had the balls to put it bluntly, but he was articulating a collective anger. We have a love-hate relationship with the advertising industry. The corporate colonization of our lives has been raucous and irresistible. It has twisted the authentic into the commercial and reduced the public to the private, transforming our homes, our streets – even our schools – into branded space.

And we have let it. Because for all that we blame the ad men, this is the world that we created. We have submitted willingly to our re-classification from democracy to demographic, watched passively as the balance of power shifted from military muscle to market forces, and indulged shamelessly in the golden age of consumerism that followed.

So why the anger? Perhaps it's about guilt. Consumer power could destroy the world tomorrow, but it's hard to vote with your feet when they're stamped with a smooth. Perhaps it's a cultural thing. There's something vulgar about advertising, something peculiarly un-British in this nation that breeds at self-promotion. Or perhaps it's simpler than that. Perhaps the truth is that there's just a whole load of shit advertising out there and nobody likes to be taken for a fool.

The ad industry has thrived on bullshit. From cereal commercials in the '50s (Everyday pleasures like smoking are important!) to the painfully contrived insurance spots that litter daytime TV. This is the industry's bread and butter – a world of casual manipulation, marketing smokecreens and pseudo-science. But this is yesterday's advertising – an analogue hangover in a digital age.

The explosion of new media has ushered in a new era, but advances in technology alone can't

account for the fundamental shift in attitude that's taking place among a handful of cutting-edge ad agencies. One in particular is leading the charge towards a brave new world.



Based in East London, Mother is notoriously tight-lipped. Fitbitly. In the reception area of their cavernous HQ, *Easy Rider* is playing soundlessly on a widescreen wall. Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper's labour of love was a film ahead of its time: one that threw out the rulebook and re-invented the business. Mother may not admit it, but it's an apt metaphor for a company where subversion hangs heavy in the air.

It was founded in 1996 when Robert Saville, then-creative director of BGT, was approached to oversee the launch of Channel Five. BGT client Blackadder objected, so Saville called up an old colleague, Mark Wootes. Lobby Brokaw and Stef Celcrott and asked them to join him at a new agency. "This was in the days before we knew that Channel Five was still" despised Wootes today. ☞

Mother was the right agency at the right time. "It was just when we were starting to see how powerful PowerBooks were, and of course the internet had kicked in a year or two before," says Wotke. "What was fantastic at that time was that the lines between ad agency, design group and editor were just coming down. You didn't know where the new ideas were going to come from next and who was going to be doing them."

In the 13 years since, Mother has suffered its share of detritors – as Wotke points out. "Being an ad agency in 'trendy Silicon Valley' you're a large, slow-moving target and people can't resist having a shot." But right from the start, the crucial difference with this agency was that it wasn't going to be an agency at all. Mother wouldn't try and sedate the suspicions that people had towards advertising. It would show their cynicism, amplify it even, and in that find a barbed and twisted truth.

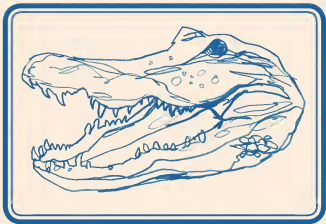
"You've gotta tell the truth," says Wotke. "The ads that most annoy me are the ones for some Japanese car or whatever, but the lie is 'You'll love it so much.' And somebody's put razor wire round it and dogs. It's not that they're telling lies, but you're not telling the truth. It's just a piece of call shit, so how can you ever connect with your audience? Far better to go out and say, 'Yeah, we know it's a piece of dull shit, which is why we're encouraging you to give it a silly name...' Then you're communicating because you're being honest."

Mother's honesty inspired some of the best advertising of the last 15 years – some of the best creative thinking in fact. Its back-catalogue reads like one of those 100 Greatest list shows. The Grunge ads in essence that rip the piss out of corporations for ruining film? Mother. The Pinnos ads that impose the perception of Pinnos drinkers as poth trawls? Mother. The Fanta Z ad that admitted Fanta Lite was crap? Mother. The Pat Noodle ad that called everyone who eats Pat Noodle fat and lazy? Mother.

But advertising was only part of what the agency was about. "We used to say back then that the problem with an advertising agency was that they knew the solution to the client's problem before they heard it, and that solution was advertising," says Wotke. "Whereas we would say, 'It might not be advertising. Let's just hear your problem and let's come up with the right solution to it.'"

Mother's founding partners took an initiative leap. According to Al Macculloch, a nine-year veteran, early campaigns for the likes of PG Tips (the ones with Johnny Vegas and monkey) were inspired by classic television – Hancock's Half Hour and Steptoe and Son. As they were "essentially interrupting people's entertainment in order to try and get a message out there," the idea was to be as "entertaining as the entertainment that you're interrupting."

This coupled with Wotke's realisation that "trillions and trillions are being spent on research and development for tools like



TVO, Sky and ITV) that help people avoid what we do for a living" led to a radical new approach. They realised that brands couldn't stay stuck in the same old places, repeating the same old messages. The 1950s model of advertising had no place in the twenty-first century. As Maccaush explains, "We always wanted to entertain. Taking it into longer form entertainment was a natural step for us because we wanted to do that anyway."



Where before Mother had been inspired by sitcoms, movies, books and graphic novels, the future lay in making those things themselves. They were evolving from advertising to entertainment – but Mother still answered to its corporate clients. If anything, they were inviting brands into our cultural space through the back door, breaking down the barriers between art and commerce.

This is dangerous. As Naomi Klein wrote in [No Logo](#), corporations are naturally acquisitive. Once you allow them to advertise in ways that subvert the traditional demarcations between culture and commerce, "the effect is not always the original intent, is to rid the hosting culture into the background and make the brand the star. It is not to sponsor culture but to be the culture."

Unsurprisingly, both Wades and Maccaush reject the idea that they're helping brands undermine our once pure cultural space. "Clients have always promoted their brands in imaginative ways," argues Wades. "People talk about advertiser-funded programming but we always had advertiser-funded programming. We've basically had advertiser-funded art because people would take the money that clients were spending to run their programmes and if you give it to the right people they come back with [Boys From The Black Street](#)."

But this is different. Mother aren't trying to attach their client's name to the right TV programme – they want to make the TV programme from scratch, with the client on board the whole way. This is what happened with Mother's greatest success to date, [Sandra Brown](#). Directed by [Shane Meadows](#), Sandra Brown was a feature-length film funded by Eurostar at the heart of London's regenerated Kings Cross area, an area dominated by the Eurostar terminal at St Pancras. The story of two young boys whose awestruck friendship is challenged by an older girl that both of them fall for. It made no overt references to its corporate patronage and was generally greeted favourably by audiences and critics alike.



This, says Maccaush, is the key point about moving brands into entertainment. "I think you only have an issue with it when the thing that is produced isn't good enough. If the thing that is produced is brilliant and worth somebody's time and maybe even money, where's the issue?" Asked whether there's a slippery slope argument to the crossover between brands and movies, Kit Hawkins, who joined Mother from a background in film producing and talent management, adds, "Ideas that are born out of the more liberal side of culture will always exist. I don't think that you can ever take that over. Where brands are becoming more and more relevant is where the existing business models for entertainment are falling apart, which is opening the door to brands to become more involved. Those areas have always had brands in them. It's just the route through that is different now. The pure forms of art and culture haven't been affected by brands nor will they ever be affected by brands."



So here we are, sat in a shabby chic coffee shop in East London, in the shadow of the far grander Shard-like House. It's another good metaphor for Mother – eschewing the obvious for a place among the brick terraces and cracked-concrete at street level. Three of the team are here to discuss a new project surrounded by fluffy pink pastries and loquats in ironic wool coats. The details are top secret, but the tenor of the conversation is instructive. The talk is of "anti-establishment", of "internationalism", of classic films and "soft money".

Because this is the next phase of Mother's seed of the puns metaphor. When you've got an office full of people gagging to make moves, why sit around and wait for a brand to come along? The next logical step is to do it not just by yourself, but for yourself too. In 2008 they launched an unbranded comic book in *Yow Out Why?* Because they wanted to. This is the next level – an amalgam of client-funding business and creatively inspiring passion projects: part-ad company, part-entertainment agency, part-mutuals, part-art school.

"We only ever wanted to be a place where great ideas come from," explains Wades. "I always thought that a good creative partnership should be like art school, with people just messing around. With all of these things we're just having creative muscles that will bubble up in other parts of the day job."

Adds Maccaush, "What we're incredibly interested in is new ways of doing things. There are a lot of creatives in our building who have got ambitions to tell a story, whether it's a comic strip, screenplays. We're developing two half-hour comedy series, one animated, one non-animated. It feels like there's a really good climate at the moment to be trying to experiment with new formats and new ways of telling stories. Some of them are for brands and some of them are not for brands. It isn't some form of clever manipulation," he continues. "I just think that if you're going to take up somebody's time then just be interesting. You don't need to tell somebody something." ☺



BIG

Words by
Jay Riggio



GRADE

1



HEIR



As the next generation of state school directors prepared to follow in the footsteps of Spitz, Krize, Ty Evans stands apart as the man who would be first.

More than 100 years after being named the first director of the University of Illinois, Ty Evans stands apart as the man who would be first.

As the next generation of state school directors prepared to follow in the footsteps of Spitz, Krize, Ty Evans stands apart as the man who would be first.

Evans, 67, is a former executive vice president of the University of Illinois, where he served for 10 years. He is now a senior advisor to the university's president.

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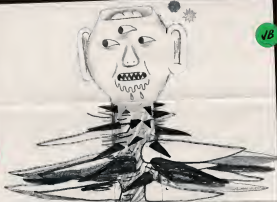


MON- STERS, INK.

Drawings By Amy Brown, Neasden Control Centre,
Jon Boam, Mark Taplin, Karolin Schnoor, Stevie Gee,
Holly Wales, Paul Willoughby & Austin From NEW.

Invented by Surrealist painters in 1925, Exquisite Corpse was a parlour game in which artists came together to create images drawn from their collective imagination. As each took his turn at the canvas before folding up the results and passing it along to the next, a Frankenstein's monster of assembled artistic parts emerged. Inspired by the spontaneous wildness of the game's results, we invited eight of our favourite artists to partake in an evening of cadaverous creation. These are the monsters of our own surreal subconscious.





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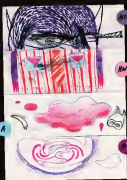
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Let The Wild Rumpus Start!



A closet homosexual traumatised by the Holocaust, Maurice Sendak's fantasy worlds were an expression of inner struggles. They retain the power to shock, unnerve and illuminate.

Words by James Bramble



Every year, the American Library Association publishes a list of the most frequently challenged books in American libraries. The books many people want withdrawn from the shelves

lest young minds should be exposed to profanity, sexuality or other subversive influences.

The list includes many of the great works of American fiction: *Of Mice and Men*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Color Purple*. From Mark Twain to Judy Blume, the High Phoenix of the challenged list, it is a revealing snapshot of the struggle between liberals and conservatives for the mind of America's children.

From *It's Perfectly Normal* by Robie Harte to Michael Wildgen's *Death in a Rosewater* or the picture book *Heather Has Two Mommies*, the list runs the gamut of conservative night-horror: homosexuality, promiscuity, masturbation, single parents, divorce – all are present in this diabolical infographic. Even *Where's Waldo?* gets mentioned for the apparent presence of bare female breasts.

At 21 in the *Is In The Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak. Though first published in 1970, this tale tells about a little boy, Mickey, and his torturous journey through a world of milk, dough and homocidal bakers continues

to attract controversy, largely due to Mickey being asked for a significant part of the story.

While some libraries first reacted by drawing Tippi for pants over Mickey's member, the flow-flowing milky fluids, the bakers, bottles and buildings, the pepperpots and spaghetti appears lost to the book's Freudian re-reading as an illustrated wilderness of pre-pubescent homosexuality. It was banned in several US states including Illinois, New Jersey, Minnesota and Texas.

This controversy might appear to be nothing more than the bawdy madness of middle America when faced with anything slightly queer. But Sendak's work has repeatedly attracted outrage precisely because it is motivated by a deliberately subversive agenda. This agenda has positioned him on the frontline of a 50-year struggle with children's literature and education. What makes Sendak different, and so interesting, is that much of what his critics aim at is actually true.



As a struggling young illustrator in 1960s New York, Sendak's great mentor and friend was the children's author Ruth Krauss, a graduate of the Bank Street College of Education. Bank Street was the center for the liberal revolution in American children's literature, an

experimental institute staffed by a collection of teachers, psychologists and researchers who came to advocate a new approach to pedagogical development.

As Sendak recently told Jennifer Luden of America's National Public Radio: "It was just at the point of Freud and children – hot, fresh, post-war interest in not letting another generation down, renewed interest in children's language, thinking, emotions, physical and mental development. Ruth was a Bank Street graduate so all her books had to do with the nightmarish of the child, his colossal ego, vanity and selfishness. The whole world was his or her."

Sendak had struggled to find a publisher due to his European style – big-headed Jewish children with dumpy bodies – until Krauss gave him his first major commission. Krauss encouraged Sendak to think critically about the meaning of his work, to re-assess the inherent prejudices and conservatism of children's literature at the time. Including its misrepresentation of traditional gender roles and a strictly limited, safety-first morality.

But perhaps most importantly for Sendak, whose childhood was blighted by illness and a family devastated and traumatised by the Holocaust, the Bank Street School was not just a celebration of the egotistical selfishness of the child but the hedonism of childhood, the unrestrained and the pursuit of pleasure. "I"

This approach is at the heart of *In the Night Kitchen*. Sendak himself has acknowledged that the book possesses not just a theme of sexuality, but a sexual undertone. As he told Ludden: "The seducing and seducing business on that book is that it's a rather complex work. To have it reduced, wrote speak, to a child's penis is a bit miserably silly. That anyone would carry on about that issue does not speak well for our culture."

"Of course [Mickey has sexual feelings]. We have them immediately [in an area]. There's nothing in the world that you can do that is not sexual. And the creative act is composed of its sexual components. I don't mean evil, bad sex, I mean that the component of sexuality, sensuality, eroticism is part of every thing. It's what blesses our love. Instead of seeing it as an obscuring way, a blameworthy way, [we should] rather see it for the beautiful thing that it is."

Thirty-eight years after the book's publication, Sendak continued to Patrono. Calm at *The New York Times* that he is gay, his large-framed partner — psychoanalyst Eugene Glynn — having died in 2007. He had kept his secret until the age of 80. Few felt that it was appropriate to comment on the sexuality of the grand old man of children's literature.

But the truth is that Sendak's sexuality probably does explain the sexual preoccupations of *In the Night Kitchen*. There is an innocent homoeroticism to his illustrations — which happen to be for a child's book. The real question is whether that should be a problem.



In the Night Kitchen was not the first book of Sendak's to question the boundaries of the acceptable. Seven years earlier, *Where the Wild Things Are* also attracted controversy on publication, though for different reasons. In the book, protagonist Max is sent to his room without any supper for misbehaving. His anger becomes star feed in a fantastical nightmarish that grows in his room, allowing access to the Wild Things when he turns purely by his own fantasies. Eventually, tamed with the fantasy, he returns home to find his dinner waiting.

The book was famously criticised by child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim in an article in *Ladies' Journal*, which argued that Max's abandonment in his bedroom without food, and

the terrible images of the Wild Things, would make children afraid of the dark and increase their fundamental fear of desertion by their parents.

"Sendak failed to understand the incredible fear it evokes in the child to be sent to bed without supper, and then by the first and foremost giver of food and security — his mother," Bettelheim wrote.

Over 40 years later, Sendak is still angered by the comment. "I wasn't going to be to modern," he told Ludden. "I was going to ask a lot of outrage from Mommy and that crew of all creeps, psychiatrists [Burt Beckett, known by me personally as 'Bertie Beckett']. He wrote a lot of things which completely destroyed the book. [Adapted Aashir account]. Did I leave the kid in a room without a light because he just might have a head attack? Mr. Beckett, may he rest in peace."

Bettelheim later wrote *The Denial of Psychoanalysis*, and the seminal text on the analysis of fairy tales from the perspective of developmental psychology. He took the most well-known fairy tales in their traditional, often kind form and deconstructed the underlying subtext of Oedipal fixations and fantasies written. The purpose of the fairy tale, he argues, is to offer encouragement and guidance through the difficult transition from childhood to independence. It is an analysis that could have been written specifically for *Where the Wild Things Are*.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about Bettelheim's criticism of Sendak is that if asking him so much, most authors and illustrators would probably owe little about the criticisms of a their relatively obscure psychologist. But Bettelheim's opinion mattered to Sendak because of the intensity of the issue and the importance of the issue, and because Sendak is an author who understands and operates within the realm of the subconscious.

This is best seen in the three works that Sendak seems most proud of: *In the Night Kitchen* and *Where the Wild Things Are* have some striking similarities. Both stories are dreamlike, set at night and begin in the bedrooms of the children. That Max and Mickey are clearly dreaming dissipates some of the horror of the bakers in the Wild Things without weakening their symbolism as threats which must be defeated by the strength of the child's will.

Sendak himself has described the books as part of a trilogy completed by the much

darker *Outside Over There*, in which a girl's jealousy and neglect of her baby brother results in him being kidnapped by goblins. As with the other two books, the protagonist, like, must travel into a fantasy world to reclaim the baby and resolve the story.

In *The Act of Machine*, Sendak, the illustrator stated: "They are all windows on the same theme: how children's innermost various feelings — rage, boredom, fear, frustration, jealousy — and struggle to come to grips with the realities of their lives."

Sendak drew inspiration for the books from troubling aspects of his own life, and his own fears. He has described *In the Night Kitchen* as "about death" and stated that the bakers were a conscious reference to the Holocaust. He has described the Wild Things as a child's view of adults with their fleshy, overgrown hands, hairy noses and teeth. And *Outside Over There*, a work he particularly cherishes, is inspired by the uncle who cared for him as a child, and his obsession with the kidnapping and murder of the Lindbergh baby.



These are not the usual sources of inspiration for children's books, but then Sendak doesn't write for children. Rather, he is motivated by a fierce duty to what he sees as truthfulness, born directly out of Beck Street and Ruth Knott. As he related to Ludden, this comes from a fierce drive "to not let the kid down. To not let the kid get punished. To not suffer the child to be dealt with in a boring, sweeping, sweeping of the spirit kind of way. The books became my audit, my rebirth for the kind of kid I wished I could have been."

Sendak hence views the progressive project of Beck Street with his own personal therapy. He has been, in his own words, "chronically unhappy", but has found greater peace in his old age, in his work with a new generation of illustrators, and in the memories and moments of his troubled, fertile imagination.

"My work was an act of warriors," he told Steven Heller in *Illustrations of American Modernism*, "an act of finding solace so that I could have peace of mind and be an artist and function in the world as a human being and a man. My mind doesn't stray beyond my own need to survive." ●

'BRIGHT STAR IS CAMPION'S
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NATHAN BURNETT, EDITOR, THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

'AN EXQUISITE PIECE OF FILM-MAKING'

'ABBIE CORNISH
IS MAGNETIC'
'BEN WHISHAW
IS MAGICAL'

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Words by Derek Hill

Let's IMAGINE MOVIES

Derek Hill, author of *Charlie Kaufman and Hollywood's Merry Band of Pranksters, Fabulists and Dreamers – An Excursion into the American New Wave*, assesses Spike Jonze's place in the legendary filmmaking class of '99.




Four Eyes
Publishing

Film movements are never fixed, despite the best efforts of critics and historians to make them so. Some, like the French *Nouvelle Vague* or the infantile fumbles of *Copie 95*, are unarguably well-defined cultural movements. But when discussing larger, more expansive groups like the New Hollywood explosion of the 1970s (Coppola, Scorsese, De Palma and the rest of the so-called 'Movie Brats'), the definition of what constitutes a real movement tends to warp over the years as who is and isn't part of it changes with the currents of taste and popularity.

In the mid-to-late '80s, building on the foundation constructed by independent directors like Jim Jarmusch, Spike Lee and David Lynch a decade before, a new generation of filmmakers — Richard Linklater, David O. Russell, Wes Anderson, Sofia Coppola, Michel Gondry and Spike Jonze — crashed the otherwise staid American independent film scene (and later mainstream Hollywood) with a series of blackly comic yet earnest, audaciously stylish, surreal and sometimes structurally daring films that helped redefine commercial cinema.

They represented a (new) American New Wave filmmakers linked by their idiosyncrasy and sometimes anxious visions who consecrated yearned for the creative freedom that the Movie Brats had attained (and later lost), but also spiritually aligned with the dynamic bravadoes of the Nouvelle Vague (Jean-Luc Godard, Eric Rohmer, Truffaut, Jacques Rivette, Alain Resnais, Claude Chabrol, Eric Rohmer), who lived and breathed films with heroic passion.



It turned out to be a landmark year for American film. The year that *The Blair Witch Project*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Elizabethtown*, *Eye Wide Shut*, *Fight Club*, *Allegory*, *The Matrix*, *Office Space*, *Rushmore*, *The Sixth Sense*, *The Thin Red Line*, *Three Kings*, and *The Virgin Suicides* were all released into cinemas. The year was 1999.

Each of them challenged us with new perspectives on old themes, helped redefine their respective genres, and some, like *The Blair Witch Project*, even chipped away at the Hollywood box office monolith for a brief moment as well as redesigning how a film could be marketed. To have so many original films released in those 12 months was remarkable. And that there was *Being John Malkovich*, the collaboration between Spike Jonze and screenwriter Charlie Kaufman,

Before his arrival on the big screen, most savvy filmmakers were already hip to Jonze due to his music video work for Sade, Youthful, the Beastie Boys, Weezer, Björk and, most memorably, the Fatboy Slim video for 'Praise You' in which Jonze and the fictional Tommore Community Dance Group demonstrated their improvisatory brilliance in front of unsuspecting bystanders.

The videos were well thought out yet experimental, provocative without being abrasive. They were also enticing teasers before the inevitable feature film debut. For a while Jonze was attached to an adaptation of Crockett Johnson's classic children's book *Harold and the Purple Crayon* for TriStar Pictures. But after more than a year working on the project TriStar pulled the plug after the executives who green-lit the film were ousted. Jonze was back on the hunt for material.

Charlie Kaufman's script for *Being John Malkovich* had been floating around Hollywood looking for a director. It eventually found its way to Jonze, who ended up being the perfect collaborator to bring Kaufman's eccentricity on the page to realization on the screen.

It could easily have gone wrong. The premise of the film is, despite its strangeness, easy to digest: an unemployed puppeteer named Craig Schwartz (John Cusack) finds clerical work with Lester Gimp, situated on floor seven-and-a-half of a Manhattan office building, lets after a cruel yet attractive co-worker, Maxine (Catherine Keener), who has no sexual interest in him, and eventually locates a portal hidden behind a filing cabinet into the literal head of actor John Malkovich. The trip inside Malkovich's head only lasts a few minutes before you're jettisoned out alongside the New Jersey Turnpike. Filled with more metaphysical questions than you had before, Craig and Maxine put an ad in the paper offering people a new experience and charge them for the pleasure of being someone else. Things go smoothly until the real Malkovich catches on, and when the actor himself travels through his own portal in the film's most rigorous and hilariously existential moment, the weird is cracked to 11.

In lesser hands the material could have wallowed in its own exoticism, never offering up anything more than an intriguing idea with a perverse take on celebrity and identity issues. But what Kaufman explores thematically and Jonze brings to vivid life is an unsettling philosophical layer amid the humor. A strong element of darkness and melancholy underpins the absurdist comedy without ever overwhelming it. Considering that Kaufman,

"In the mid-to-late '90s, a new generation of filmmakers crashed the otherwise stale American independent film scene with a series of blackly comic yet earnest, audaciously stylish, surreal and sometimes structurally daring films that helped revitalise commercial cinema."

left to his own creative devices for his directorial debut *Synchcops*, *New York* was unable to balance the humour and pessimism as effectively. Jonze's contribution to the partnership now seems even more crucial



Jonze passed on directing *Harvard Maniacs*, the next Kaufman script to hit the screen, which went instead to Michel Gondry, another music video veteran with a taste for lo-fi aesthetics, hopeless dreamer protagonists and a refreshing dismissal of convention. But unlike Jonze, who was able to complement Kaufman's narrative insouciances, Gondry seemed overwhelmed and untheatrical for his first cinematic outing.

Harvard Maniacs has some inspired moments and the lead performances, especially Rhys Ifans as the 'ape man' Puff, are wonderfully ridiculous. But the film as a whole never quite gels in the same way that *Being John Malkovich* did, and one can only wonder what Jonze would have come up with if he'd taken the director's chair. Luckily, Gondry would get another chance to direct a Kaufman script: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, and the end results were far more impressive.

Adaptation, the next Jonze/Kaufman partnership concocted in 2002, was a more studio-friendly project than their first film. Unlike *Being John Malkovich*, which was made under the radar, *Adaptation* was high profile and highly anticipated. *Being John Malkovich* had been both a critical and popular success and the film garnered plenty of award nominations and some wins (at BAFTA and the Independent Spirit Awards). And while the presence of John Cusack, Cameron Diaz and Catherine Keener – not to mention Malkovich himself – in the first film signalled Jonze and Kaufman's ability to attract important talent, their second collaboration would bring out the big guns.

Adaptation would star acting royalty Meryl Streep as real-life journalist Susan Orlean, box office heavyweight Nicolas Cage as screenwriters Charlie and Donald Kaufman, and the sturdy character actor Chris Cooper as renegade horticulturist John Laroche – the subject of Orlean's bestselling non-fiction book *The Orchid Thief*.

With that sort of acting pedigree, and with a major Hollywood studio – this time Columbia Pictures – dutifully keeping tabs on the bigger budget, *Adaptation* could easily have slipped from "B"

"Like all of the filmmakers who constitute the (new) American New Wave that emerged in the 1990s, Jonze rewards the intrepid viewer with films that assume that you're intelligent, sophisticated and yearning for something fresh."

Jonze and Kaufman's control. But if anything, the film is even more adventurous than its predecessor. It's also more structurally refined, complex, emotionally mature, and gains depth upon subsequent viewings.

Warily attempting to adapt Susan Orlean's book to the screen is an original feat, screenwriter "Charlie Kaufman", consistently demurred by his brother Donald's more successful but commercially lackluster results, grows increasingly despondent and desperate. Writer's block has long been fodder for film – *Barton Fink* and *The Shining* being two of the better ones – but none of them can match *Adaptation*’s almost masochistic delineation of the mundane drudgery surrounding the act of writing.

And while the film is technically more polished and daring on a narrative level than *Being John Malkovich*, it's also unsurprisingly more poignant and moving as we watch the fictional Orlean grapple with her inability to truly feel. Lucio's obsession with the rare ghost orchid, as well as Charlie's own frustrations at not being able to translate her book into something rewarding and unique. Beyond the meta-cleverness is a film of strange beauty, pronounced melancholy and subtle poetry. It's a film masked as a comedy but offering up something deeper though without apologizing for the accompanying laughs. It was an even more rewarding venture for Kaufman and Jonze and a harbinger of greater things to come.

The return of Spike Jonze to the screen (though sans Kaufman) has been seven years coming. On the surface, it appears to show the director striking out in an entirely new direction in bringing Maurice Sendak's children's book to the screen. Yet while the gentle anarchy of Sendak's art paired with his rhymed text is pure fantasy, fantasy is a vein Jonze has tapped before, whether via a Melancholia head portal or a metaphorical doorway that dumps its characters out of a naturalistic meditation on writer's block into the thick of an improbably plotted Hollywood thriller.



It would be reckless to think of Jonze in the same breath as fantasists like Peter Jackson or Tim Burton, filmmakers who go for broad dramatic strokes or inundate the audience with unapologetic sentimentality. Jonze sits more comfortably alongside eccentrics like Terry Gilliam, Guillermo del Toro and Jean-Pierre Jeunet, but grounds his films in a starker naturalism and the tedium of everyday life. And all filmmakers, in a broad

sense, are fantasists after all. Whether it's German Expressionism or Neo-Realism, Douglas Sirk melodrama or John Cassavetes-style improvisation, it is all fantasy, all lies.

Jonze is a curious mix of *Buñuel*, Cassavetes, the Spielberg of *Jaws* and *ET*, blessed with the anarchic comedic subterfuge of the great anti-comedian Andy Kaufman. Like all of the filmmakers who constitute the (new) American New Wave that emerged in the 1990s, Jonze rewards the intrepid viewer with films that assume that you're intelligent, sophisticated and yearning for something fresh.

It shouldn't be a big deal, but considering the bedraggled state of what hunkers out of the major Hollywood studios, the instances of true idiosyncratic filmmakers who have managed to maintain their creative equilibrium should be celebrated. Hollywood loves to eat its own, look no further than Orson Welles. So when creative minds scramble to stay afloat and still make adventuresome cinema, it's a rare and beautiful thing.

Because Jonze doesn't write his own screenplays, it can be tempting to dismiss his contributions as purely stylistic ones. That would do them a terrible disservice. While there are distinctive visual signatures to his work – the prosaic griminess in which he situates his actors, the absence of glamour, the lo-fi staging of scenes melded with a complete assuredness of tone and editing flow that never strays into the mooshier, complete fidelity for pulling off the visual hook, the sense of wonder in the mundane – they never overwhelm Kaufman's, or in the case of *Where the Wild Things Are*, Dave Eggers', own distinctive voices and contributions.

Jonze's meticulous eye for the commonplace trappings of day-to-day existence extends to his vision of a children's fantasy world populated by monsters: he reworked CGU, choosing instead to film costumed actors on set, featuring the creatures' fur with dirt and bugs, and bowing to computer technology only when the logistics of over-weighted monster headgear demanded it. It's all about adapting to the task at hand, making something worthwhile, and, dare we say, even special. As Chris Cooper states in *Adaptation*, "Adaptation is a profound process. Means you figure out how to thrive in the world."

But no one said thriving couldn't be enjoyable too. ■

Charlie Kaufman and Hollywood's *Merry Band of Firebugs, Fairies and Deities* – An Excursion into the American New Wave is available now, published by Kinner Books.

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Trouble in Paradise

It took five long years of studio arguments, production delays and postponed release dates for Spike Jonze to bring *Where The Wild Things Are* to the screen. But he isn't the first director to find that his dream job has turned into a nightmare.

Words by Anton Bitel

Filmmaking is essentially a quixotic business. Directors begin with a vision, which must then be shepherded through all manner of practical obstacles – the limitations of budget, the unpredictability of the elements, the unreliability of equipment, and the fallibility (if not downright hostility) of cast and crew – before it can finally be realised on the screen; often in a form quite different from that which was originally envisaged.

But for every naive production (accap: there are those films whose troubled back stories illustrate perfectly the special blend of fantasy and folly that sends directors flitting off windmills – and sometimes even emerging victorious from their mad battles against the realities of filmmaking).

THE MANY DEATHS OF DON QUIXOTE *Lost in La Mancha* (2002)

Cervantes' romantic fantasist has himself proved an elusive movie subject. In 1955, for example, that most quixotic of directors, Orson Welles, began shooting a self-financed, metacinematic version of *Don Quixote*.

He was still at it some 20 years later, long after his leading man, Fernando Rey, had upped and died – before it could ever be completed. Welles had himself passed away, but seven years later, in 1992, a more or less coherent cut was assembled and released by Europe's most prolific exploitationeer, Jean-François 'Joli' about high ideals brought low.

The following decade, Terry Gilliam – another director known for taking on impossible challenges (*Brazil*, *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*) – undertook his own postmodern

take on Cervantes, entitled *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*.

After a decade-long attempt to secure funding from Hollywood, Gilliam turned instead to European investors, and by 2001 everything was finally in place and meticulously prepared, only for the shoot to collapse entirely after just six days – brought down by sorry NATO flyovers, unforeseen hailstorms and flash floods in the Spanish desert, as well as the double-helixed disc that rendered lead actor Jean Rochefort medically unfit to continue.

The best thing to come out of this debacle was Keith Fulton and Louis Pogo's feature-length 'unmaking of' documentary *Lost in La Mancha*. Gilliam, however, has now repurchased his script from the production's investors and recommenced pre-production. *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* is tentatively scheduled for a 2011 release. **CB**

RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE *Fatale* (1981)

In *Les Blancs*' 1982 documentary *Bandes of Desire*, **Walter Herzog** describes his film *Fatale* as a 'Stryphian-like story, a story of the challenge of the impossible.' The same was true of its production.

Apparently determined to stare in his protagonist's obsessive struggle, the director insisted on filming in the remote Peruvian jungle with an army of authentic natives serving as extras. His first location camp, set up in 1979 when it looked war with Ecuador was in full swing nearby, had to be abandoned when divisive tribal politics and false rumours about the jungle 'Sivaram's' intentions led to death threats.

By 1981 a new camp had been found, but then, five weeks into production, lead actor Jason Roberts was put out of action by cerebral dysentery, and his co-star Mick Jagger, unable to commit to further weeks of rehearsals, also pulled out. Left with no one to play the film's hero, Herzog turned to his 'best friend' **Glenn Kessler**, the notoriously difficult actor whom, on the set of *Apocalypse Now* in 1972, Herzog had threatened to shoot dead.

Kessler's endless ranting tortures were not, however, Herzog's biggest problem. The real *bande* 'Walter Herzog's *Fatale* (1981)' *Fatale* once had a boat disassembled, its parts carried over a hill, and reassembled on the other side. Sporting a control operator for his largely fictionalised protagonist's land more importantly his own psychic madness, Herzog decided instead to film a much larger steamship being dragged in one piece over a much steeper slope (a logistical nightmare that stalled for months and almost cost the film). He was also determined to ride a second steamboat as it went crashing out of control down Peru's most dangerous rapids (resulting in injuries to three of the six crew on board with him). The result is, of course, Herzog's best known film and one of cinema's finest explorations of impossible dreams.

HENRI-GEORGES CLOUZOT IN FILMMAKING HELL *L'Éclair* (1964)

Though Herzog rode his madness all the way to its end, not all filmmakers can be so headstrong. **Henri-Georges Clouzot's** *L'Éclair*, born from the director's personal experience of mental breakdown, was to have been a drama about the fascinatingly pathological jealousy harboured by a provincial hotelier, told in a bold new cinematic language that would convert viewers into protagonist Marcel's neurotic, anxiety-filled and highly unreliable perspective.

A single screening of Clouzot's hallucinatory test film was enough to secure him an colossal budget, and bring together a crew of Hollywoodian proportions. But despite highly detailed storyboarding and preparations, the production became stired in Clouzot's unbridled perfectionism: as the director proved incapable of coping with the unprecedented deadlines that he had been granted.

By the third tortuous week of shooting, severe personality clashes drove leading man Serge Reggiani to storm off the set (never to return), and shortly afterwards, Clouzot himself suffered a heart attack, leaving the project in ruins.

All that remained of the exorbitant producer were 185 cans of soundtrackless outdoor tapes, film reels and outdoor sequences, unopened and unseen since 1964 – until 2005, when film restoration specialist Serge Bromberg happened to get stuck for two hours in a broken elevator with Clouzot's window lens, and learnt of their existence.

His wonderful documentary *Henri-Georges Clouzot's Inferno* tells the whole sorry tale, while reconstructing from the surviving footage (and some disaster re-enactments of dialogue scenes) a taste of what might have been a landmark in subjective cinema but for (and also precisely because of) its director's obsessive quest for impossibly high standards.

DARKNESS AND DREAMS *Strawhead* (1977)

'Making a film with joy, Lynch, is one frame at a time.' So said **Jack Nance** of his experiences playing Henry in David Lynch's feature debut *Strawhead*, and he had a point.

Despite deriving from a screenplay that was merely 30 pages in length, the production of *Strawhead* stretched over some five years, as Lynch and his tiny crew used abandoned studios behind the American Film Institute to create from scratch a hermetic world of darkness and dreams. When, after two years, cinematographer Herb Radsch decided to move on, the inaction period that he spent on set training his replacement Fred Fries in the film's idiosyncratic lighting scheme lasted four whole weeks – longer than the entire production for some films.

One sequence consists of 18-month footage between a shot of Henry opening a door, and the next shot of him entering the room. At one point Lynch became so frustrated with the film's incomplete state that he contemplated shooting off the remaining scenes in stop-motion plasticine. 'One frame at a time' indeed.

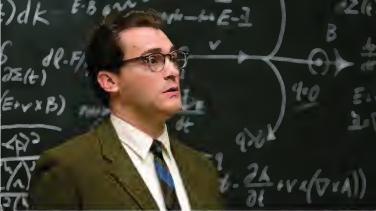
Still, it takes persistence to realise a singular vision. The result of all Lynch's nocturnal labours is a nightmare jay of lived-in textures and layered atmospheres, often evoked but never belated. It's also a compelling (if bewildering) drama of one man's attempt to dream his way out of his own shadowy reality. Which it, is a nutshell, what cinema is for. **D**

3



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Chapter After Four in which we view the last of the festive Releases



A SERIOUS MAN

VIDEO
Reviews X

WHEN IT COMES TO THE
COMEDY OF THE YEAR
GOING TO THE MOVIES

The Coen brothers *sure know* how to frustrate. Since the early days of *Heavenly Creatures* (I don't know: Maybe it was *U2's*?) to last year's oddly pointless *Burn After Reading* ("I'm fucked if I know what we did?"), this is a duo who load audiences down uniquely named paths only to leave them a little stranded, reluctant to explain the journey. *A Serious Man* is no different: yet more the worse for it. Utterly frustrating is the point.

Stay for the doing credits and there's a disclaimer that hints at the authors' thinking: "No Jews were harmed in the making of this picture. It could almost be the film subtitle. Thus the Coens at their most cheeky and personal, placing the story in their hometown Jewish suburb of St Louis Park, Minnesota, circa 1962."

It's a *very American*—*very Jewish-American*—setting, but

any fan of *Woody Allen* will wish the blend of nebbishy path and dark laughs (there's even a nod to Woody's legendary Mouse word-y routine.) The self-loathing social anxiety of *The Graduate*—made the year that this set—also looms large.

After the star-laden weight of *Burn After Reading*, *A Serious Man* is leaner. Stage actor Michael Stuhlbarg takes the lead as Larry Gopnik, a mild-mannered physics teacher whose average life—family, job, new house and garden—slips out of his grip when divorce, teenage rebellion and workplace bullying suddenly trip up his comfortable existence. With his socially astute brother (Richard Kind) and a hapful neighbor (Amy Landecker) also preying on his mind, Larry wonders whether he can ever be the kind

of upstanding individual that his ethnicity demands of him.

Here is proof of comedy and tragedy's close relationship. Larry is essentially having a nervous breakdown yet it's a *the Coen* most humorously funny script in years. While the faith-specific elements might deter some, the gallery of grotesques are brutal enough to widely appeal. Robles, school principals, Uncle Arthur with his subconscious—no social institutions are safe: yet without them Larry knows that his life would be even more wretched. Believe unknowns keep our baggage to a minimum allowing wisely-honed performances. When Stuhlbarg's newly Larry balances precariously on his roof to watch his neighbour sunbathing, there's a genuine helplessness that a "narrow star" would struggle to rephrase.



A Jewish parable to the point a 20th-century urban legend spoken in Yiddish might encourage the main feature to be seen as a parable but returning to that end credit disclaimer, *A Serious Man* is the Coens' least serious film for a long time. Using the hilariously random counterbalance that we've come to expect, it's their reminder that it's pointless to try and control the events of your life. Frustrating? Of course: but that's always good for a laugh. **James King**

Anticipation: Did the way to Clonney hit but the Coens are the movie that looks eddier? **1**

Disappointment: Only laughs and nothing—what's not to like? **2**

In Retrospect: I love my job that looks to be confined to deliver top **3**



COLD SOULS

WATCH
Giamatti

TECHNIQUE
Giamatti plays Gansert
in *Cold Souls*

Google the word "soul" and you're flooded with up million links, all relating to jazz or religion. *Cold Souls* is somewhat in neither of these. With a trippy premise loosely dreamed up by director Sophie Barthes, it is a puny and ponderous, cloying nod and wink to the likes of *Philly 4*, *Dick*, and *Charlie Kaufman*. But it is also gloriously ironic.

Paul Giamatti plays Paul Gansert (*Jack*), suffering through his own interpretation of Russian stage play Uncle Vanya. Rehearsals are not going well. "It's like somebody put my heart in a vice," the actor whines after playing out a particularly overwrought scene. "You take things too seriously," his director mutters, and this is true of both the character and the actor. Pitched as a lonely, unstable spirit,

Gansert shifts gears in a spade, heaving his leaden soul around like a yoke. He barely cracks a smile for the entire hour and a half.

Then he happens upon Soul Storage, a company that does exactly what it says on the tin. It offers to derive a person's immaterial soul from them and store it away where it can bother them no more. No attempt at scientific clarification here—*Cold Souls* is embedded resolutely in its own off-kilter reality that usually adorns explanation. So when we learn that something called "soul" is fading, so be it, and the narrative splits to encompass Russian soul-forsing, "Inside Nina" (Dana Kaur), it makes a perfect kind of sense.

Which all sounds very profound. And it sort of is. It's Barthes channel-

her native French cinema to produce something beautiful and overly dense, with flickers of humor that busy proceedings take these gone. Giamatti is disconcerted when he discovers that his extracted soul resembles nothing more than a chickpea, while his damage as his soul being stolen—in second only to his honor that a Russian woman—across is using it to cheap up a soap opera ("She'll destroy it").

But craps aside, and despite all its chatter about the human spirit, *Cold Souls* remains disappointingly disaffection. The tragic, seemingly doomed Nina—whose moribund soul has left her with no much soul leader—has the only probably never take back her own soul—seems for sympathy, but never ques-

ture it. And not even a location jump to Russia enters the film's lecherous first act, with a blond villain character quickly offloaded and any tension evaporating in the face of a silly backdrop plot. "Hollow, light, empty," Giamatti murmurs as he describes his feelings of post-extraction soullessness. Funny how those adjectives apply to his film too. **Jackie Weinman**

Anticipation Gansert and Gansert's party is probable 1

Engagement Soul burning and strange distant though it may be, there is still some interesting ideas 2

In retrospect Thought promising that relative *Cold Souls* director kind of my feeling making this all really realistic 3



THE LIMITS OF CONTROL

IMAGES BY JAMES JARMUSCH
STYLING BY TONY
OF BORN, CALIFORNIA

ALBUM
December 11

Fortunately for Jim Jarmusch, Louche De Boncole has the sort of face that could fit an audience's gaze for hours. Brooding, sharp yet unrefined, it is no coincidence that this subtle, lean actor already collaborated with the prolific free-form filmmaker.

Here, much like *Paterson*, Whiskey's *Ghost Dog*, De Boncole plays a wandering isolate known only as Lone Man who aside from a series of well-cut (if fleeting) interludes, waits to carry the film solo. Amidst the dully paced he occupies a vested space. He is a shadow; his clothes undecorated, his motives unexplored and ultimately insignificant.

JENNIFER'S BODY

IMAGES BY JAMES JARMUSCH
STYLING BY TONY
OF BORN, CALIFORNIA

ALBUM
December 11

As horror films have splattered into a mind-boggling array of sub-genres—from noir species of horror porn to Japanese remakes to low-cost low-rate British zombie flicks—the highest teen horror comedy has been left on the sidelines.

Enter Diablo Cody, the writer behind the award-winning *Lano*, with noble intentions to inject some life into this abandoned genre with *Jennifer's Body*. It is ostensibly a tale of two friends—the bookish and underappreciated Needy (Amanda Seyfried), and the bubbly implausibly sexy and ridiculously popular Jennifer (Diogenes Fong)—who find their long-standing friendship under threat after Jennifer's corpulent body is possessed by a demon after a sacrifice gone awry.



Rather than surveying America through foreign eyes, Jarmusch takes his horizon band of adult cinema to Japan, where he inserts the distinctive character/environment dynamic that has long permeated his work. When this foreign locale the director arrives adopting his wryly exploring and capturing the romantic nuance of Seville and Alamo.

From crisp scenes to rural postures, our lone protagonist is left to his own devices, with passing exchanges bringing him ever nearer to his clandestine

objective. Or not. Jarmusch's troupe of study go-betweens seems more as directional microphones than narrative architects. But for all that these interludes occasionally drag, few filmmakers can embody the character ensemble with Jarmusch's precision and wit.

Laced with the deadpan slights of hand that is the director's hallmark, these unfamiliar with Jarmusch's brand of indie minutiae may find *The Limits of Control* hard to stomach. This is a demanding film that will no doubt fuel the

art-house mavens, yet still against a vivid Spanish canvas Jarmusch's poetic permeance he comes not only enjoyable but palatable as well. **Adam Woodward**

Anticipation: Jarmusch anyone? **1**

Engagement: Not as culturally enticing as previous encounters, but well-timed and visually stunning nonetheless. **2**

Is It Unique: Jarmusch fans will rejoice, but present off-puttingness might suffer the couple meet the film on a date too. **3**



The final real shock comes with the realization that Megan Fox can act. The film doesn't exactly push her very hard (though this may tell, in fact, be the least of her talents), and at no point does she look anything like a regular, under-18 high school student, but she has been given a role that actually requires her to do more than stand in front of a green-screen looking hot. And she does it rather well.

Amanda Seyfried also puts in a solid performance, backed up by Johnny Simione as a geeky boyfriend, while JK Simmons offers

top-good comedic support with a terrible wig and a hook for a hand.

The script is peppered with plenty of Cody's quirky language and a smattering of neat touches, but this is (only) genre filmmaking at its most elementary—box ticking, rather than envelope pushing. Though shot with some by Kathryn Kassam, *Jennifer's Body* neither reaches for nor attains any great heights.

It possesses none of the knowing wit that made the first *Scrubs* such a breath of freshly exploited air, nor is it as scary as "real" horror. And although *Jennifer's*

Body offers up both laughs and frights, each is doled out in only the measure of assurance, with the film just scraping through to a lackluster and unsatisfying finish. **JW Smith**

Anticipation: Diablo Cody (unique and talented playwright) has (not) lost a great sense of humor. **2**

Engagement: *Jennifer's Body* takes good, nasty good and feels good, but there's nothing more to it than cinematic barf. **3**

Is It Unique: Just don't hang around with scared here and there, but really forgettable. **3**

RICHARD KELLY: OUTSIDE THE BOX INTERVIEW BY NELL FRIZZELL

FILMOGRAPHY RICHARD KELLY

The Box (2009)
Southland Tales (2006)
Broken English (2002)

When it comes to second-acture symptoms, few experiences were tricker than Richard Kelly's follow up to the unexpectedly enormous *Dancer in the Dark*. At the age of just 32, Kelly was riding a career peak, facing pressure from both indie and mainstream cinema to pull another rabbit out of the hat. The result? *Southland Tales* — a dystopian vision of LA on the brink of apocalypse. Let's just say that I wasn't a universal success.

"After the difficulty of *Southland Tales*, I knew I needed to write something more simple," says Kelly, fresh from his morning workout in LA. "With *The Box* I made a conscious decision to make a more mainstream film."

While the may know Kelly's die-hard fans his conclusion, the director himself is by no means pragmatic: "I know that *The Box* is going to be a defining film in my career. It's my first studio film and I've never had a direct hit at the box office. A lot is riding on this film," he admits.

A lot indeed. It is said that any actor is only as good as his last film, and the same is surely true for directors. "What [*Dancer in the Dark*] really happened when I was very, very young," explains Kelly. "I was pretty amazed by it. I felt pretty amazed by it. Right now, I'm just trying to hold on to my integrity and my nose."

The Box is based on a short story by Richard Matheson. It is, Kelly admits, "certainly the most autobiographical film I've ever made." Kelly was born in Virginia, where his father worked as a scientist at NASA and his mother as an English teacher. In 1964 the family moved to Richmond, to precisely the sort of neighborhood where *The Box* is set. Like the film's young protagonist Walter Lewis, Kelly was fascinated with his father's work on NASA's Viking project (Jupiter post) now to obtain high-resolution images of the surface of Mars and structure much of his ideas in the boundaries of science, migration and human consciousness to his childhood.

Was he not worried about bringing so much of his own life into the film? "I intentionally brought my parents into this," says Kelly. "In fact, it was intended to be a slightly belated tribute to my parents. They grew up on Hitchcock and I remember going to the cinema to watch these movies with them. It is like telling my parents a life story through the lens."

Kelly's parents were clearly an important cognitive influence on the young director. "My parents always encouraged me to get into art," he says. "So I had a really strong feeling that I should be doing this with my life." Even after his fall from grace, after *Southland Tales* failed to perform as well as *Dancer in the Dark*, Kelly was determined to continue with his film career.

As with *Dancer in the Dark*, much of the dramatic power of *The Box* stems from the tension between fate vs. spiritual authority, fate and human morality. In parts of America, particularly in states such as Virginia, these elements are often seen as subject matters of the Church. Isn't he worried about what the neighbours will say? "You know, I was always constantly wanting to avoid answers," explains Kelly. "There were lots of religious people in the community where we grew up. But I think, as a teenager, my dad wasn't particularly religious — he would do yard work on Sundays. I remember going to church a few times when I was younger, but then my brother and I decided that it wasn't really something we wanted to do. I guess I was the kid who was always asking the difficult questions in Sunday school. And I still am."

Kelly's films all seem concerned with the potential in life's liminal spaces — in those places between two opposites, whether suburban, midnight, dreaming, apocalypse or adolescence. Why does he continue to return to these themes? "I think there is something about a mystery that untolds in your bedroom that is profoundly unsettling," he suggests, "because that's where we spend our lives."

John Paul Sartre's play *Les Bains*, in which three characters spend their lives trapped not in a suburban house but in the terrible nowhere place of a single, anonymous room, clearly serves as a metaphorical presence in *The Box*, as the Lewis family become trapped within their secret tragedy. "I was taught *Les Bains* in high grade and it had a real impact," says Kelly. "As well as Camus' *Le Gammelle* it had a profound impact on my adolescence."

In between doing press for *The Box*, and of course these daily workouts, Kelly is busy writing the script for his next film. Unlike *Dancer in the Dark* or *The Box*, the script is a period piece. It had the film is set in the near future, so we do see a return to the landscape of *Southland Tales*? "It's definitely different to *Southland Tales*," says Kelly. "I can't say much about it, but it's about a much more specific event in Manhattan. About how that affects the infrastructure of media conglomerates. It's an ambience film. And I imagine the only way it will get made is if *The Box* is a success."

For Kelly, it seems, his future as a filmmaker is still very much hanging in the balance.

Check out the full interview online in the week of release.



THE BOX

PREVIEW *Insidious*
LIAM *What Do
You Dream About?*

WILLIAM
Curious

It's like to assume that Richard Kelly is familiar with the work of Stanley Kubrick, David Lynch and the Coen brothers. However, while his latest film owes much to the dark, suspense-filled magical realism of *The Shining*, *Mulholland Drive* or *Requiem for a Dream*, it is an undeniably glossy, Hollywood affair.

The film is once again set in the apparently magical world of period American suburbia (this time, the mid-'70s). A frenetically aching Cameron Diaz plays Norma Lewis, talent agent Drew Barrymore's Donna Drake role as an inspiring female teacher here explaining Joan Paul Sartre's *No Exit* – where hell is defined as other people – to her students. Along with her husband, Arthur (Chris Messina), and son, Walter (Sam Claflin), Max Lewis

enjoys a large, if financially strained, life in Virginia. Until a mysterious box is left outside their home and a tall, grey-haired stranger arrives at her door. A stranger with half his face missing.

Describing himself as 'just a man with a job to do', this comic-book villain (played masterfully by Frank Langella) explains to Norma that the box left on her doorstep contains a button. If she presses this button, Norma will receive one million dollars, but someone she doesn't know will die. Friends, we have an ethical dilemma.

Set against the backdrop of America's nuclear era, race and domestic paranoia, the film looks at our capacity for dreams, self-knowledge and illusion. It's less about the hallmarks of Kelly's

other films – sinister themes, questions of free will, troubled sons, slivers of consciousness, the absurd and the gayness between poetic and police, real and imagined, guilt and innocence.

The story follows a difficult moral arc, which begins more than a passing resemblance to the allegory of *Adam and Eve*. Norma and Arthur are a seemingly innocent couple faced with a dire temptation, the consequences of which they cannot possibly comprehend until it is too late. But *The Box* shines with its biblical predecessor a troubling sense that the female of the species is generally to blame for our woes.

The ending too is problematic. Death is pitched against double, the sacrifice of a parent against the 'normalcy' of the son. Those familiar

with the story of Helen Keller – a blind and deaf American author, activist and lecturer – may well find the dramatic climax unconvincing, if not offensive.

Sisters, time and at times ridiculous. The film has warped genre piece – Kelly's homage to 1950s science-fiction – with all the wobbly effects, tired homeliness and pseudo-religious imagery that suggests *Nell* Perren.

Verdict: After the dramatic trip of *Insidious*, Kelly needs to put us off.

Engagement: You know this film is actually quite good. But a good thing. The idea is to make it.

In Brief: A glossy suspense film goes into with a pretty decent ending.



BRIGHT
STAR

REVIEW
by Mark K.

REVIEW
JENNIFER
JENNIFER



In January 1954, crime-farmer
recent film director François
Truffaut months before his own
short film debut, published a 5,000-
word article in the French-language
journal *Cahiers du Cinéma* called
"Une certaine tendance du cinéma
français." The piece was Truffaut's
mission statement: a *cinéma de auteur*
and his own *À bout de bras*.

The subject was the future
of French cinema. The enemy
was so-called quality filmmaking:
bourgeois cinema made by the
bourgeois for the bourgeois. This
was the twisted *cinéma de papa*—
falsified adaptations of literary texts,
period novels and lavish romantic
dramas. This was cinema without
passion, intent or a single guiding
principle other than tastelessness.
This was, well, a surprisingly
accurate description of Jane
Campion's new movie. (Single Star
Campion was born in New

Zealand three months after Truffaut's
broadsheet for the newsmagazine. She
spent her adult career making
movies that were visually and
politically provocative (from *Sweetie*
to *In the Company of Men*) films that lived up to
the passionate ideals of artistry and
authorship established by Truffaut
(ideals that would subsequently
redefine the entire art of filmmaking
and film criticism). Which is why
her unstable, anti-social, androgynous
heroine is all the more harrowing.

The film, set in the grey
mud-soaked Hangedman of
1818, attempts to describe the
all-consuming love affair between
doomed Romantic poet John Keats
(Ben Whishaw) and his sparring
partner Fanny Browne (Albaa
Corrêa). Dramatically sane from
first to final frame, it charts the non-
progress of the central relationship
as a series of nineteenth-century
fruits and counterfruits.

Here, though destined to be
together, Keats and Browne are
apostrophically separated, in classic Jane
Austen style, by increasingly tedious
improvement social slight: he thinks
she's falling for his best friend, she
thinks he's ignoring her by going
to the Isle of Wight; he's apologetic
when she gets a mysterious
Valentine's card; she spends the
day crying when he fails to visit
her. And so on and so on as they go
ping-ponging hopelessly between
frustration and capture for nearly
two solid hours of agony until Keats
finally succumbs to tuberculosis
and dies, off camera, in Rome.

Campion, of course, has
repeatedly claimed that Browne is
her anti-Jane Austen heroine and
a decidedly modern protagonist. But
this making-itself-responsible to
justify in a character who takes to her
bed in concerns of doubt, and who
dies just two hours' night-lipped

loses with a man who, famously, in
his poem "La Belle Dame Sans Merci,"
wrote lustily about making "sweet
music" with his lover and placing her
all day long, upon his pacing speed.

As for the poetry itself?
Watching the big, fine-haired
Ben Whishaw quietly channeling
Keats' "told poems in the final scenes
is about as rascally as watching
Anthony Hopkins paint "Guernica" in
Surrender, Please, or Ewan
McGregor announce, "I shall call
a 'Ozymis'" in *Idiot*. It is the last act
of a desperate director and the
hopeless, comical trademark of
the cinema de papa. Kevin Maher

Adaptation: Jane Campion has yet to
make a studio. (Jenna's director)

Copycat: What?

In the Company: Is an 18th-century boy
but what left is?



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SASHA GREY: PORN ACTRESS INTERVIEW BY JONATHAN CROCKER

FILMOGRAPHY
SASHA GREY
by Edward Barker (C)

Where do you begin with Sasha Grey? At the beginning? When, aged 18, she made \$7,000 from a webcam job, left home for LA and got started in the porn biz. A couple of years later? When, in 2008, she became the youngest porn star ever to win the AVN Female Performer of the Year award, having already been photographed by Terry Richardson, graced the cover of a *Smashing Pumpkins* album, and modeled for *American Apparel*. In the here and now? When, after being rooted in the scene of Los Angeles magazine, Grey has made the move into the mainstream with a lead role in Steven Soderbergh's *The Girlfriend Experience*.

Wherever you start, you finish with the same bundle of contradictions and busy truths. Grey is an adult industry icon whose cultural relevance peaks include *Jean-Luc Godard*, *Grace Under Fire* and *Angie Hunte*. She's the devil-eyed angel whose penchant for provocations would naturally belie her innocent girl-cutes.

Whatever else she might be, Sasha Grey is an enigma. So it makes sense perhaps that she's been shown into the orbit of America's most enigmatic big-name director, a director whose projects oscillate wildly between the urban mainstream and agile independence.

The *Girlfriend Experience* belongs firmly in that latter category – a mood piece defined by the vaporous sensibilities of rain, attitude and slow Whodunnit through performance or biography. Grey is a postcoital presence in *Chinelo*, an escort novel through the outrageous world of high finance just as it's brought explicitly to its knees. Grey spoke to EWLive from LA.

EWLive: The *Girlfriend Experience* is essentially your non-porn debut. What do you think of it?

Grey: I thought it was great. I wasn't expecting it to be edited the way it was. That was the most shocking thing for me, which I loved. It was completely nothing like I expected it to be. I guess I didn't really have any expectations, but I didn't know that it wouldn't be linear.

EWLive: What did Steven Soderbergh say to you about your role either before or during production?

Grey: Well... [laughs] I didn't really know where to start. As far as the film itself goes, it was a pretty short conversation. That I would have a heavily improvised role. Everything is new day-by-day. That was the gist.

EWLive: So you had no script?

Grey: I had no script, I had no outline, I knew the general beginning, middle and end of the film and that was about it. So I wrote a character biography and sent it to Steven. I just journal an act. And Steven and I interviewed two escorts before we shot the film. And I read these anonymously written meeting logs.

EWLive: Were you nervous?

Grey: I was mentally excited because it's a huge bit of me, actually. It was really exciting. And the first few days I was nervous. I had no idea. When you haven't slept with somebody before, you don't know how they work. It took a few days to get into the groove but after that it was a lot of fun.

EWLive: Why did you consider "Vance Kerkis" as your porn name?

Grey: It was a flight of fancy. It was on a long list of names. And my agent at the time talked me out of it. It's really glad I didn't choose it. It's already somebody else's name and I think the novelty of it would have worn off quite quickly.

EWLive: Do you feel like you've conquered porn and it's time to move on now?

Grey: I wouldn't say "conquered". For me, right now, I'm at the second stage, personally speaking, where I've just started directing my own adult films. It's a whole new challenge for me and I love it because it's like running a marathon. You're figuring out how to solve problems, and that's what you're doing every day on the set. So it's really motivating for me.

EWLive: What if someone like, say, Spielberg offered you a role in a big Hollywood blockbuster?

Grey: I would definitely be more interested in a role where I'm portraying an actual character rather than myself, yeah, but anybody would feel that way. I'm interested in challenging roles where I can just die in it. It seems like a lot of bigger blockbuster film these days there are really no strong, powerful roles for women. They're really low and far between if you're talking about big, big movies. But as far as independent film go, it's a different story.

EWLive: So do you have something exciting coming up?

Grey: I'm doing a film in December.

EWLive: Can you talk about it?

Grey: I don't think I can.

EWLive: We won't tell anyone.

Grey: Oh sure I've heard that one before.

EWLive: So what about *Smash Cut*, the indie horror film you had in *RightFest*?

Grey: *Smash Cut* is a homage to *'Godfather of Gore'* Herschell Gordon Lewis. It's a love letter to him. It's really cool. Peter Onoradio, David Hesse, and Michael Benjamin have a role in it too, so it's just a really goofy, campy, dark comedy horror film.

EWLive: You've said you'd love to work with Lars Von Trier next. What's your favorite Von Trier film?

Grey: Hmm... It's a tough call. I'd have to say *Life's Bittersweet*, *Breaking the Waves* and *Detour* to *Ten Clark*.

EWLive: How long do you think you'll stay in porn?

Grey: You know, that's a tough call too. Because when I was brand new, I thought I'd, um, stay years. But now that I have my own company, I think you kind of know. You really kind of know. And it depends on your attitude. I want to retire from the nude gracefully.



THE GIRLFRIEND EXPERIENCE

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Hardcore guru *and* Jenna Grey wants to be a serious actress, but playing a call girl in *The Girlfriend Experience* isn't much of a stretch considering her career highlights include winning an award for Best Three Way Fuck Scene in 2007 (did I tell you about that?) and posing herself as a performance artist determined and ready to become a commodity that fulfills everyone's fantasies. Or perhaps Steven Soderbergh was simply facing a mid-life crisis, led up with George Clooney and Brad Pitt, and just fancied jumping at the female form for the day in the life drama.

The story drifts among the New York lives of Grey's clients with the throwback pretensions of *Lost in Translation*, but unlike Scorsese

Johansson, Grey really can act. And she does more than just flash her charms. She's not an authorized vision of perfect beauty. At just 21, she shies around the black enough times to inform the darker moments experienced by Chelsea, an escort who tests her relationship with a fitness instructor by getting too close to one of her clients.

Offering a service that allows men to ditch relationship trauma for a guaranteed good time, Chelsea faces fierce competition as we follow her quest to branch out against the backdrop of a global recession in a pre-Obama America. *Alone* of the vacuumness of her existence, Chelsea's well-meaning as the story goes deeper. "You have to adapt to become something they want..."

Soderbergh's directly time-shifting narrative shows us consequences before action, which ramps up the intrigue as the fragility of Chelsea's existence is exposed by a seemingly comic encounter with a seasoned escort posing as an erotic-commodore. "All women are evil because they have all the power and they know that," he declares. "While the poorly informed script works wonders in this scene — nowhere (and film noir) Gene Keeney made the show worth his turn as the Harry Knowles of internet escort recoveries — the film's vague tone fails to fully develop Chelsea's world, and Soderbergh sidesteps the question of whether women in her position are empowered or damned by their career choice.

The implied intimacy Chelsea offers her clients, which grounds their fantasy in a man who has everything's reality, raises more questions than it answers. But Soderbergh proves he's still got the finesse of touch that marked him out as one to watch 30 years ago with *Six, Six, and Videotape*. **Dan Snierson**

Anticipation: Will the critics ever going for Steven Soderbergh? **C**

Engagement: It's a bit out of my Big Apple. **C**

In the Spotlight: How the hell is the money but someone the internet's sex star who can act. **Mia Farrow** **Dan Snierson** **C**

SÉRAPHINE

WORTH WATCHING
SÉRAPHINE (Léa Seydoux) is a French actress who plays the lead role in the film.

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SÉRAPHINE (Léa Seydoux) is a French actress who plays the lead role in the film.

From Kirk Douglas' anguished son Gogh in *La Vie de Gogh* to Denis Jacob's sensitive French Bacon in *Love Is the Devil*, we only seem to venerate our on-screen artists if they have suffered terrible hardships. This trend continues in Marina Prokhor's biopic of *Séraphine Louis*, a key painter in the avant-garde.

In the early 1900s, Séraphine (Léa Seydoux) works as a maid for the wealthy Madame Duphot (Geneviève Miroir) in a small French town where she finds herself in contact with one of Duphot's tenants, the German art critic and dealer Wilhelm Uhde (Ulrich Tukur). Uhde quickly recognizes Séraphine's talent for painting and becomes an

enthusiastic supporter of her work. But the Great War forces Uhde to flee, leaving Séraphine to her own devices, obscenely painting despite the ravages of war and poverty. When Uhde returns, will he be able to realize her talent any further?

Léa Seydoux gives a rousing performance in the lead role, radiating a desire to transcend that contrasts with her flashes of serene creative talent and passion. The scenes in which she acquires a number of different paintings (such as pag. 100) and

endure war's almost as if they were shot as pornography act to highlight her increasing while her external spirit into depression and madness as well-handed.

But despite this performance – and some gorgeous cinematography that echoes Séraphine's work – the film ends up something of a muddle that moves too hard to wear its "quality" tag upon its sleeve. It throws up interesting ideas about the power of the creative urge, individual versus collective madness, and commercialism.

against artistic intent, but they're never fully explored. Instead, we're left with a film of brilliant parts that never hangs together as a whole. **Lawrence Royle**

Artistic: It's been a year of the best French films of the year. **1**

Delight: The acting and music are compelling but overshadowed by a dense emotion. **1**

In retrospect: Séraphine is as beautiful as painting but just as one-dimensional. **1**



I'M GONNA EXPLODE

WORTH WATCHING
I'M GONNA EXPLODE (Léa Seydoux) is a French actress who plays the lead role in the film.

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I'M GONNA EXPLODE (Léa Seydoux) is a French actress who plays the lead role in the film.

Romain (Jean-Pierre L  aud), a troubled teen and son of a corrupt right-wing politician, is intent on rebelling against anything and everything. A shocking performance at the school a film that grabs the attention of Marie (Marie Denchamps) – a disillusioned youth down to his fellow rebellion. In a bid to make against their parental oppressions, the pair decides to run away (though they end up hiding out on Romain's rooftop in an attempt to live an existence free from the restrictions of the real world).

Surviving by way of stealing supplies from Romain's parents, the two teens eat, sleep and generally remain inactive until they decide to take their rebellion on the road.

With an abundance of references to the work of Jean-Luc Godard, writer-director Gerardo Naranjo

has created a lively, angry ridden homage of sorts to *Pierrot le fou*, though the director avoids the habitual machismo that dominates such subject matter by placing more emphasis on the female rebel without a cause.

Naranjo's free-wheeling direction is complemented splendidly by Denchamps – a charismatic leading lady who, although a novice in front of the camera, induces a mesmerizing viscosity. Beginning with high-octane energy re-emphasizing Naranjo's visual flair and photographic eye,

the film captures the impetuosity of adolescence – incorporating a clunky – exhilarating tone that mirrors our protagonists' actions.

Unfortunately, that energy begins to wane during the third act, and as the increasingly tedious antics of these middle-class upstarts begin to grate, the film loses momentum. It becomes evident that *I'm Gonna Explode* is a couple of quipshots of dissonance.

Unfortunately Naranjo takes a predictable route, though, in fairness, while the film's climax feels inevitable, it is no less moving for its

'While not entirely successful in its execution, a sporadic, energetic style makes the journey worthwhile, and both director and leading lady are names to look out for in the future. **Lee Griffiths**

Artistic: A lush and vibrant take on the love of the sun. **1**

Delight: Style and vibrant taking leading director towards the end. **1**

In retrospect: Affective shows for Gerardo Naranjo dual fair and a love shot for leading lady Marie Denchamps. **1**



THE DESCENT: PART 2

REVIEW
by **Scott F.**

THE DESCENT
PART 2: A Tense, Terrifying Sequel
by **Scott F.**

Fixing ferocious subterranean cannibalism against badass lady caves (this is not a euphemism). Ned Marshalls *The Descent* is a strong contender for the best British horror film ever made. The sense for this second installment, directed by original editor Jon Harris, seems to be: don't screw up the franchise—and be largely successful.

Neither a great film, nor a bad sequel. Part 2 picks up where Marshell left off. The unnamed heroine Sarah (Shauna Macdonald) escapes an intense raid from the Appalachian caves, and before you can say, "Don't go back into that underground darkness!" the women conspire to make her do just



that. Admittedly, not very well.

Strong-armed into joining the "Silent Rescue Expedition River Mounted by Sheriff Vines (Gavan O'Herlihy)" — a character so hacktarded you wonder how he walks and speaks at the same time — Macdonald's soon being lowered down a rusty manhole (also not a euphemism) into the gloom below. Big mistake.

Besides some cruddy dialogue ("There's nothing down here that could have done that," she says, apparently not corner character) and

endless cut-in-the-fridge moments (see *What Lies Beneath*) for an explanation, the film eventually finds its feet.

Capably shot, scored and acted (particularly by Macdonald, who flips convincingly from costume action to Ripley-style heroine). It refuses to sleep on the claret or the claustrophobia, but remains tense rather than scary. How much of this is down to the solidity of the film itself, and how much is down to the cleverly evoked echoes of its source material is debatable.

Other than an exciting underwater sequence and the comical misadventures of Sheriff Vines, there's little new here. At one point our heroes even clamber over the corpses of the original film's victims to get to safety. In no way, on reflection, a bad metaphor for the entire enterprise. **Mark Gladys**

Anticipation: Please don't ruin it! **F**

Enjoyment: Actually, it would be! **F**

In Retrospect: Efficient if underwhelming. **C**

EXAMINED LIFE

REVIEW
by **Scott F.**

EXAMINED LIFE:
A Tense, Terrifying Sequel
by **Scott F.**

There is a moment in the 2002 documentary *Deleuze* when French philosopher Jacques Deleuze expresses his intellectual necessities. Enclosed by a wall of books, the camera's intrusive framing seeks to both harness and lay bare this late, great literary theorist, then in the context of his Pearson studio. Deleuze's natural easiness wins out. In this instance it becomes impossible to relate to the man behind the philosophical façade — his positive thoughts given no wider point of context.

By contrast, *Examined Life* is more than just a superficial snapshot of a key contemporary thinker. In fact Adam Taylor does an entirely inordinate after inspecting little in the way of philosophical proficiency and offering up an appetizing feast of food for thought.



Right great thinkers from various academic disciplines and walks of life are accompanied by Taylor, who recognizes a series of pertinent notions to juxtapose their useful musings. Whether posing by trendy Manhattan boutiques where consumers are put to the sword, traversing San Francisco's Mission District and contemplating society's selfishness, or exercising ecology inside a recycling plant, each reflection carries a resonance that transcends its source.

This conversationalist asks Taylor a dozen to demystify some

of life's greatest meanings. As the conversation proceeds, her subjects from simply winning scholarly, the insights what might otherwise look like a leadenly academic agenda. Jumping from one madcap contemplation to another, the film occasionally runs the risk of being too busy for its own good, but a senselessly playful narrative means that the audience is never in danger of overbored overkill.

Like most, but always accessible — Taylor's bull-eye avoids the idiosyncrasy that his work has previously entailed.

In bringing philosophy into the real world, *Examined Life* is as much illuminating and intellectually stimulating. **Adam Woodward**

Anticipation: Potentially thought-provoking subject matter. But potentially engaging-looking too. **F**

Enjoyment: Unintentionally enlightening and not entirely pointless, but engaging and fulfilling nonetheless. **F**

In Retrospect: Taylor gets the director subject against and is not just a thinking film, but a thought-provoking one. **F**



JASON SCHWARTZMAN: BURNING BRIGHT INTERVIEW BY MATT BOCHENSKI

SELECT FILMOGRAPHY JASON SCHWARTZMAN

Antoine & Genevieve (2005)
Love Poems (2005)
The Butterfly Effect (2006)
Notes on a Scandal (2006)
Breakfast with Champions (2006)
Dead Poets Society (2007)
Twelve (2007)
Up in the Air (2009)
Julianne (2010)

Fittingly for a guy who played the last King of France, Jason Schwartzman was born into movie royalty. Part of the Coppola dynasty — nephew of Francis Ford, cousin of Sofia and Roman, son of producer Jack Schwartzman and actress Tala Bickman — getting into film should have been a walk in the park.

And, honestly, from a distance it kind of looked like it was. He started at the top, in Wes Anderson's brilliant debut, *Rushmore*, as iconic high-school student Max Fisher. That kicked off a career that's seen Schwartzman cemented, if not on the A-list exactly, then certainly among the bright young things that gravitated towards Anderson's happen-things-thou-wish-thou-were-thou. He starred in Roman Coppola's bizarre sci-fi *DG*. He worked with such provocateurs like Jonas Auerum and David O. Russell. He cowrote *The Day After Tomorrow* in late night Paris.

But looks can be deceiving. Max Fisher once said, "You've gotta find something you love to do and then do it for the rest of your life." For Max, it was going to *Rushmore*. For Schwartzman, it was... anything but life.

Growing up in the '60s, the imperial era of Anne and Sly, Schwartzman admits, "I didn't feel that I had ever found a movie that was addressing the feelings I was having. And I especially never thought that I would be acting in movies because of those guys [using their legions-for-life stars]. I had an inner feeling of not being very popular, like didn't talk to me, [I looked] at all the things that I thought you needed to be in order, like popularity or a huge sense of self-confidence. I was more like a loner playing with myself in the back yard."

Schwartzman's first love was music. "I gravitated towards music because I felt like music was speaking to me, was addressing me more directly. And, you know, it wasn't Hollywood. You could literally have a drum set or a guitar in your house and be making music by yourself — coming home from school and putting on headphones and playing along with records. That was what I was relating to."

It wasn't until he was 16 that Schwartzman experienced an epiphany inspired, perhaps indirectly, by his family. "I was sick and my mum went out and for whatever reason she sent me these movies, *Manchurian Candidate*, *The Godfather* and *Dog Day Afternoon*," he recalls. "I watched them all right long over and over again, and that was the first time that movie ever really made me feel the way that movie did. That was the moment — there was a warmth that I felt when I saw those movies and I thought, 'Whatever I do with my life, I gotta try and stay as close to the warmth as possible.'"

If movies were the warmth, Wes Anderson was the fire. Schwartzman describes the director as "my mentor" and his "best friend." By the middle of the decade, with Anderson at the peak of his powers after *The Royal Tenenbaums*, and Schwartzman making inroads into the mainstream, the pair of them appeared to have the world at their feet. Joined by Sofia and Roman Coppola, Wes' working buddy Owen Wilson and old-wager Bill Murray, they formed what looked like a Catholic-esque troupe of artists and authors, caught somewhere between a romantic vision of the past and an accelerated dash towards the future.

Schwartzman was flying between Europe and America, filming *Marie Antoinette* with Sofia and writing *The Day After Tomorrow* with Wes. It sounds impossibly romantic — a life lived between late night busbars and radio film sets. And indeed, says Schwartzman, it was both. "Nothing in the moment seemed as I seemed retrospectively," he says. "At the time I was working on *Marie Antoinette* in Paris, and after I'd worked 11-hour days, Wes and Roman and I would go find whatever was open and have dinner. And the places weren't very nice, the food wasn't very good, the coffee was always kind of cold. And it was not great, but I sounds so romantic in retrospect."

But he's keen to play down the idea that he was part of some exclusive gang, especially given his own experience growing up. The suggestion, he says, "misreads all those feelings that I had in high school about not being part of things because I was such an outcast — I was never part of the group that I wanted to be a part of, I was always by myself. So it always makes it hurt extra deep down when I hear about these little gangs of people at [the film] movements. Even now when I read about little pockets of people in the film industry who all work together I'd be lying if I said I didn't feel excluded from them as I'm angry at them."

Despite the connections, the success and the authentic poster sensibility (potentially, maybe because of the authentic poster sensibility), Schwartzman continues to find the business a struggle. "There are some actors who can get anything made that they want. It's like literally ordering a pizza — they just kind of order a pizza and someone delivers it. For me it's harder, it's more mysterious," he says. "But I don't really have a mysterious — I'm not a cartoonist, in my mind I wasn't supposed to be doing this for a living. The whole thing is intense to me as I approach it from being made of it and very much outside of it."

And it's not all been a smooth ride. Neither *The Day After Tomorrow* nor *Marie Antoinette* exactly wowed the crowds, but Schwartzman is smart enough to be sanguine about the twin imposition of success and failure. "Of course I feel it," he says of the outcome that came with the territory. "But the greatest thing about movies is that people can love a movie and people can hate a movie and they're both right. I think that all I can do is the best that I can and work as hard as I can and just try to choose things that I love and hopefully they are loved and if they're not that's what comes from making anything."

"Art and movies, that's to me the most powerful things that we've got as humans," he continues. "That's what we do. That's why we're human. So we're just got to keep making stuff and I'll be glad you do another one; if that's bad you do another one; if it's good God bless it. I just keep working and by not to get too down if people don't respond to it. Because the whole business is such a fucking mystery."

[Read the full, exclusive interview online now.](#)



FANTASTIC MR. FOX

ANIMATED
COMEDY

INSPIRED BY Roald
DAHL'S
1970 novel *Fantastic Mr. Fox*
and *James and the Giant Peach*

"I guess underneath it all I just need to be loved," muses Mr. Fox as he contemplates the prospect of a ruined home, a kidnapped nephew and a marriage hanging by the thinnest of threads. Unfortunately, the same can't be said of Wes Anderson.

Anderson has been elevating funk for the better part of half a decade because he doesn't care about being loved. After the mastery of experience contained in *Bohemian* and *The Royal Tenenbaums*, his films remained into *Blue* (a prison romance, masquerading as a comedy), *Money* for charm, and cynicism for wit.

Now at last he's rediscovered his mojo—and in the most unlikely of circumstances. *Fantastic Mr. Fox* is Anderson and Noah Baumbach's adaptation of the Roald Dahl classic. And what they've done with it is something close to alchemy.

The basic bones are intact: the cunning Mr. Fox (voiced by George Clooney) steals from three wealthy

farmers who, by night, try to kill him. A life-and-death battle of wits ensues in which friends and family are caught in the crossfire. Being responsible for their wellbeing, Mr. Fox conceives a daring plan to take the fight to the money. So far, so Dahl, but almost everything else has been indirectly reimagined.

Mr. Fox himself is an urban charmer, a columnist that's turned newspaper columnist who dresses like a 19th-century country gent (not unlike Anderson). "Dad of feeling poor," he engages his lawyer, (Kiefer Sutherland), to buy him a fine new property overlooking the farms of Boggs, Bunce and Bean—a daily indignation that sets Port's hair on end as war within.

All the quips that seemed to spruce Anderson's last two films here pay off in spades. Shooting its stunning low-fi stop-motion (a world away from Nick Park or Henry Selick but infused with the influence of Dutch animator Jan Svoboda),

the director's genius for production design comes to the fore. The sets are a treasure trove of quirky details, retro-games and sturdy anvils. *Alexander* Depledge's score is skillfully integrated into the action, while the herky-jerky animation gives the film a vintage, vintage quality that allows a two-finger salute to the genre's OG technicians.

The performers too are happily likable. George Clooney seems to have an instinctive grasp of voice acting. Bill Murray and Owen Wilson have enjoyable cameos, while Jason Schwartzman just about keeps it handle on the film's more difficult role as Port's frustrated son.

The question anchors the film is for Anderson has given Dahl's story a sensitive, sophisticated edge that's not especially child friendly (although in fairness he's also baked in a Hollywood ending to keep them happy). The tension between nature and nurture, the Mowsey of hidden desires, the futures of family

humans, indifference, death and redemption—all are explored here, buried beneath the tale for and human eyes.

Perhaps Anderson hasn't changed at all, then. Perhaps that's just another film for the tin crowd—a watch and admire as any other, as Fox himself put that's the point: here it fits it works. When the right filmmaker and the right subject matter come together the result is the one of *Punch* (don't apples)—artificial in many respects, but with stars on it nonetheless. **Matt Buchanan**

Delightful Anderson has a talent for the subtlety of the *Mr. Fox* (and *Mr. Fox*) **D**

Engaged The film is a masterpiece. Anderson's best work *Mr. Fox* **D**

In *Mr. Fox* All these years later it's an American legend. The art is like no other **D**



CRACKS

HEARD
SCOTT'S

SCOTT'S
CRACKS
SCOTT'S



Modern adolescence is tough, you pour your heart and soul into a film only to throw it out to the boys, ruses to see it either held aloft as a masterpiece, ripped to shreds or—worse of all—ignored.

And the pressure is surely intensified when you're a filmmaker cut from legendary cloth, emerging from a family that has already conquered the business. Scorsese a thought for Jordan Scott, who has much to prove, not just because this is her debut feature, but also because she is the daughter of Ridley—father of cinematic icons *Alien* and *Batman*—and the niece of Yang, who's moved the action genre with movies like *The Get* and *Days of Thunder*.

So has this newest Scott followed in their footsteps with a big budget feature full of mouth-blowing visuals and groundbreaking effects? In a word, no. Instead, Scott has taken a rather more dramatic

approach with an adaptation of *Cracks*, the novel by Sheila Kohler set in the corridors of a South African all-girls boarding school.

Moving the location to the wilds of the British Isles during the 1930s, the narrative focuses on the school's dingy rooms led by the headmistress, Dr. Janet Temple, and their beautiful coach Miss G. (Eva Green). As Miss G. regulates the girls with rules of her merciless, inspects them cigarettes and lures them with attention, it's clear why she is their favorite. But the arrival of newcomer Florence (Mia G.) soon upsets the status quo.

As Miss G. becomes fascinated by the free-spirited Spaniard, so jealousy and resentment among the other girls reaches critical mass (and even goes dangerously out of control).

The premise is strong and the concept of a group of susceptible pubescent girls being led down

entirely the wrong path by an unhinged teacher is packed with potential threat. Yet all the dark psychological elements of the original story have been overshadowed by Scott's overzealous direction, which gives the whole drama the air of Sunday afternoon TV.

This soft focus approach doesn't sit well with the disturbing central theme of the manipulation of children, and although this misuse may have been the intent, it comes across as disjointed and at times—particularly in the sequences featuring the girls indulging in hair brushing, pillow fights and other boarding school clichés—unnecessarily indulgent, bordering on exploitation.

Which is a shame, because there are some good performances here. Eva Green is both mesmerizing and menacing as the unstable Miss G. convincingly accepting from self-assured victim to emotional predator

across the film's running time. And the girls too are solid across the board, with Temple and Waverley being particularly memorable, sparring off each other as the uptight English rose and the exotic interloper respectively.

Unfortunately however, the strength of the cast is not enough to shoulder the weight of the film, which is heavy with symbolism but utterly devoid of momentum. And by the time Clarke reaches his admirably shocking denouement, it's simply too little, too late. **Miké McGowan**

Anticipation: A girls' boarding school in 1930s England? **July** looking good! **D**

Edginess: Even if the stars prove to be truly fit, Green can't help Clarke escape the inevitable **disturbance**. **D**

In the end: Heavy-handed director brings in nothing but **disturbance**. **D**

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ONOI TIMONER: ONLINE ORACLE INTERVIEW BY MATT BOCHENSKI

FILMOGRAPHY ONOI TIMONER

We Are Robots (2009)
Joah (2007)
Break (2006)
My Little
Web (2005)

Onoi Timoner came at home in London. She's sitting on a roof terrace overlooking the city,atching about the traffic and worrying about the weather. But Timoner is New York through and through. In 1995, coming around to make money for her documentary *Joah*, a friend suggested she head down to NYC's "Silicon Alley" to check out a company called Pandora. Pandora was the baby of one of its leading lights, Josh Harris.

Harris is one of the most interesting — and at the same time one of the most over-exposed — of the early internet pioneers. Rastinely described as "the Weibo of the web," he made their last millions through a network of online TV shows, 15 years before YouTube had popularized the idea of internet video.

But Harris was so much more than a millionaire super geek. He was an authentic visionary who realized early on in the web's dawn that this was a tool that could bring people together in previously unimaginable ways. And with that, he decided, would be an opportunity for a smart, wealthy and ruthless operator to expose people's desperate desire for fame and connection through a series of elaborate stunts.

The most sophisticated of these stunts was the art project *Quiet: We Live in Public*, a prelo Big Brother bunker that housed a hundred of Harris' friends for a million-dollar party in New York. There were rules to sleep in, a single open shower, tables with no cubicles and access covering every foot of the underground space. There was also a shooting gallery with live surveillance and regular, physically demanding interrogations.

An Timoner's new film, *We Live in Public*, shows the experiment ended with a police raid and Harris' house turning empty on his persons. The film is named for Harris' new project, *wherethepublic.com*, in which he and his girlfriend ended out their relationship in a painful separation in via live broadcast.

Her film, says Timoner, is about "the dark side of the internet — it's the dark side of the way we behave." Harris, who suffered with his own demons, had a cynical, even nihilistic view of people's desire for fame; one that has been borne out by the rise of reality TV. But Timoner has bigger things on her mind: her masterpiece is to do Harris' early experiments into the pervasive expansion of the internet into all aspects of our lives from Facebook to Twitter to the iPhone and beyond.

Describing Harris as "a cautionary tale," Timoner explains: "We've added to the internet in 10 short years. It really begs the question: where are we headed from here? Is the net going to do as Josh is us," she continues. "The thing we're the people in the bunker and Josh is Facebook. We're all in this bunker and when we connect the fence and windows [of digital life], we're doing the same thing that they did when they walked into the bunker."

We don't feel like that because we're sitting in our houses and it's comfortable and whatever, but we're not reading the terms and conditions, we're just clicking because we don't have time, we don't care, we don't think there's any risk involved, it feels very innocuous. But really these companies that are providing an incredible platform for us to connect are also exploiting us."

But what if anybody who's managed to resist the ubiquity of Facebook? Timoner believes that the idea of disconnection affects all of us regardless. "I think from the moment we're born and our umbilical cord is cut we look for a way not to be alone," she says. "We engage in relationships, we join groups, we join clubs, we join churches and now the ultimate way to do that is the internet because there's always somebody on the other side. But at the same time as we're connecting up, we're disconnecting us from our physical lives and the idea of friendship."

Much like *Joah*, the film's production took on a warped life of its own as Timoner was sucked into Harris' world. Having showed him an early cut of the bunker material (an experience that Timoner says she "didn't enjoy at all"), Timoner returned from Sundance to find that Harris had got into her apartment and stolen the master tapes. An assistant editor (who later apologized after going through AA) gave up the tape after Harris threatened to pull the plug on the funding.

The online strategy had learned the first law of the reality TV jungle: "He was the puppet master and here I was controlling his image and he didn't like that," explains Timoner. "He couldn't handle it because at the time he was doing *wherethepublic.com* and he was getting totally pissed by the chatrooms and made fun of, and he was just really hating himself and he girlfriend was leaving him and he was using all his money so he had all this stuff going on in his life."

Eventually, Timoner came back on the project with creative control and a new perspective as social networking sites began their inexorable rise. But her relationship with Harris was irreparably damaged. "I don't like him at all," she admits. "He's missing a very core human trait, like an almost heart core. He'll come anybody over. Everything's a game to him. Seen now. Even after being off the grid. Even since Sundance. It's got to the point where I'm gonna walk from the project if he continues because I can't be working for this guy. He doesn't make rational decisions and I don't believe in his business sense. But at the same time I have compassion for him."

That is Timoner's strength as a filmmaker. Just as she found the heroic side in *Joah's* Anton Newcombe, she's able to humanize this flawed and opaque individual who was so far ahead of the game that he wasn't able to grasp the consequences.

Check out the full transcript online in the week of the film's release



WE LIVE
IN PUBLIC

WE LIVE
IN PUBLIC

WE LIVE
IN PUBLIC



While spending seven years following *The Dandy Warhols* and *Brins Jonsson* (Mosses for rock-dog classic *Dog*), director Chad Timoner was putting in an even bigger stint as a quite different film.

We Live in Public is the result of 5,000 hours of footage that dates back to 1999, the heyday of Josh Harris. Harris was a man ahead of his time: visionary founder of Parado.com, the first online TV channel, he was worth \$55 million before the age of 40.

Five of New York's *Silicon Alley* Harris became a major player in the city's avant-garde art scene, bankrolling a series of extravagant projects. But his most notorious stunt, *Quits*, *We Live in Public*, he built a huge bunker that housed a decadent million-dollar party in which every participant was invited to quit.

That proto-movie TV project, part-concert-stage camp, the bunker experiment crashed and

burned. In pre-*Guardians of the Galaxy* era, Harris' own personal and financial collapse is his obsession with the internet—and, more specifically, the way it could be harnessed to fuel people's desire for connection at any cost—began to exert a destructive pressure on his life. And thirty years later, he started turning up in business meetings dressed as a clown called Lenny.

We Live in Public is, in part, a merciless portrait of a radical entrepreneur with unique psychopaths. Captured on camera through straight-up interviews, but more tellingly through archive footage that includes a literal taped message to his dying mother (Harris refused to act her) and web-cam clips of his deteriorating relationship with girlfriend Tanya Quattri, Harris is revealed to be the classic little boy lost. As a child, his only source of emotional sustenance was his television, and as a man, it's only through the media con-

textualization of technology that Harris can truly understand the concept of intimacy.

Less convincingly, *We Live in Public* is a warning. In Timoner's eyes, Harris is a symbol of what happens when you break down the boundaries between technology and the self. As our private thoughts are uploaded to public places and Facebook friends replace the real thing, our feelings of connection mask the reality that we are isolating ourselves in an artificial world.

Perhaps for a younger generation these concerns may ring true. If they're not online, do they exist? But for Timoner to presuppose that we're all heading that way ignores the fact that for every Facebook and MySpace addict, there are thousands of people for whom life continues as usual.

There's more weight in her argument that the corporations behind these social networking giants have consumed dangerously

awareness rights over the material that grows out of our lives, but this is the inevitable consequence of a new technology that has grown with phenomenal speed, not a doomsday scenario.

What Timoner has done for sure is ascribable another documentary of monumental scope. She has a precious knack for being in the right place at the right time, allied to a filmmaker's instinct for narrative, and a journalist's tenacity. There's no one else like her out there. **Matt Richerson**

Antiquities *Agf* walked out that Timoner's ability to get to the heart of physical documentary subjects lay in her big gun. **D**

Daguerre Where does she find these people? *Antiquities* documentary should be the task of the artist. **D**

In the Spotlight *Antiquities* is a record of where we might be headed, but enough looking at it to always identify. **D**



BUNNY AND THE BULL

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Channeling the abstract absurdity of Monty Python, and the gleeful comic sensibility of Carry On, *Bunny and the Bull* is very much a case of back to the future for British comedy.

Billed as the *Mighty Boosh* movie, *Bunny* is the brainchild of Paul King, the screenwriter who made his name on the comedy series set in London's East End. And though *Bunny* is its own beast, a lot of what made the *Boosh* tick is present here – the wild flights of imagination, the paranoiac fantasy, not to mention the epic silliness, the great one-liners and the ubiquitous Julian Barratt and Noel Fielding.

But it's telling that those two take a back seat. Our heroes are Stephen (Ed Hogg) and his best mate Barry (Simon Farnaby) whose European road trip is unravelled through a series of off-kilter

backtracks from Stephen's flat – an OCD nightmare that ruminates, blues with and eventually becomes his own twisted brain space.

The road trip it transpires did not go well. After hooking up with Spanish waitress Eloisa (Veronica Rieyga) in a Polish Mr Kebab (a diner inspired – as all things should be – by Spongfish Squarefanta) the threesome set off for Seville, a semi-mythical location where love will be lost, hearts will be broken and lives will be changed forever.

Though inspired by the likes of Tarantino, Gilroy and Dennis Ross, King is no TV channel imitating his heroes. He demonstrates the same natural gift for cinema as *Spidey Whizz*, but unlike the *Spidey* crew you get the sense that he won't be scolding around the cosy mainstream of British cinema. There's an anachronic spirit, a created creativity

to *Bunny and the Bull* that puts it out of sight of its peers.

The *Boosh* aesthetic works brilliantly on the big screen. Except it's cooked through a grab bag of increasingly deranged cardboard cutouts and DFX effects. It's Gaudy on acid, spinning camels through a geyser, for the imagination. It's also sharp-tongued, emotionally honest and above all very very funny.

With *Willy Wonka*, barely having stepped from cinema, Ed Hogg continues to tell it as a peculiarly twenty-first century lead – whip-thin, mouse-eyed and neurotic as hell. But it's Simon Farnaby who steals the show, charismatic, confident and with a liquid humorist delivery. He also gets the film's best line – a piece of gross-out slapstick advice that every man should follow

There's, in a sense, a small film. Low budget, no real stars (unless you play abroad). But it's so much more than that, too. *Bunny and the Bull* is an original, inventive, occasionally startling British comedy that showcases a budding talent in Paul King. There's no doubt he could follow a well-trodden path to blockbuster glory, but you get the feeling that he'd rather take the road less travelled. Lucky us. **Matt Morshead**

Anticipation: The *Willy Wonka* is a star but won't set a lot of hearts on *Bunny and the Bull*. **1**

Engagement: There's no tiny bit of reality in it. And anyway, you'll be too busy laughing to care. **1**

Is It Relevant: It could be. British comedy that isn't in league with the London-based band. **1**

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THE MERRY GENTLEMAN

6.4/10
A-List
Summer 1

2015 RFP Best Actor
2016 RFP Best Actor
2017 RFP Best Actor



For historian **Michael Keaton** has done something quite remarkable for his directorial debut: Ignoring the market that remembers his glibly '80s glory days, as well as those who know him for his cynical comedy roles, *The Merry Gentleman* sees Keaton tackling, in a personally unplanned territory—the emotional drama. Not only that, but he's made the ambitious decision to take on the dual responsibility of director and leading man. A recipe for disaster?

It may well could be, and *The Merry Gentleman* is not without its faults. But playing Frank Logan, a man of dubious morals and even more dubious motives, Keaton has gifted himself his most rewarding character to years, and therein lies one of *Gentleman's* great strengths.

Character is in the eye, and Kea-

toner (Kelly Macdonald) is hoping to make a fresh go of it in Chicago. Having led an abusive marriage, she's got a new job, a new pad, and a fading black eye that she employs all manner of cover-up techniques to explain away. When she spots a man standing on the roof-edge of the building across the street from her office, she yells out, and believes she has averted off a potential suicide attempt.

Unbeknownst to her, the man on the roof is Frank Logan, and he's just shot one of Kate's co-workers. An assassin by profession, Frank is suffering from paranoia and a serious case of the latter blues. Drawn to Kate, he orchestrates a happenstance meeting, and a volatile friendship develops between the two—that can either of their pasts ever be forgiven, or forgiven?

Merry the isn't. Jumping Kate's constant victim with Frank's constant killer is an interesting rise, and Macdonald and Keaton act admirably, each closed off to the world in their own ways yet hopeful of evolution and new futures. "He stole me as quite a private person," notes Kate. "I'm quite a private person, too." And she is, but she's also—annoyingly—the sort of thoughtless character who exhibits scumminess-the-screen behaviour. A person to whom things happen, Kate is portrayed as the slightly gormless eye of an increasingly expensiveness scene, despite Macdonald's best efforts.

On the phrase, Keaton the director wisely draws a leaf from Clint Eastwood's book: Keeping the filming neat, his style is the kind of understated classical filmmaking that is a dying breed

in contemporary Hollywood. Unwieldy of means, Keaton allows *Gentleman's* intimacy plot to unravel in fraction so slowly, but proves a deft hand where it comes to character. Unsurprisingly here an actor's director, drawing a fantastic performance from Robby Cornselle, and pitching an effective portrait of assassin Frank as a disillusioned lover who's lost all value in life. **Josh Whitting**

Antiquities *Keaton is the deathly star?*
Unsettled. Will he be the new Sean Penn or the new Nicolas Cage? **B**

Dogpound *Keaton keeps it long, slow, and steady, but the director, it's kind of slow though.* **B**

In Between *Keaton's understated and subtle, but the directorial debut is a story that's definitely.* **B**



TULPAN

OPENING In a quiet, remote Kazakh town, a young man searches for a wife and a flock.

BEHOLD A stick figure.

Investing the ethnographic documentary with city wit and wry absurdity, Sergei Dovmontov's *Tulpan* is a quiet revolution. Amid the scorching sands of a Kazakh desert, a young man, Ashbat (Ashbat Kuchenchirov), searches for a wife and a flock. This same easy task when he shares a crowded yurt with his sister Sazal (Sazal Kalyanov) and her envious husband Ondas (Ondas Bekbaev) and the only woman for miles around is the elusive Tulpan. Strangely behind a curtain with a veil pulled tightly across her face, Tulpan is a song girl of ungraspability with no interest in her hapless suitors.

Unfolding in glacial takes, Dovmontov's film has an obscure, anthropological edge. Life in the desert unfolds—a cycle of struggle

in which survival is a cruel victory. The pace and nature of this life are superbly studied in a series of wide, wide-angle shots, in which the long-gonded actors—the grazing of sheep, the excited games of children—become a study of nature that exists around and beyond the frame.

But it's no mere museum piece. Though beset by financial and technical troubles during production (not least because of the remote location shoot), the film finally shone on Dovmontov while his career was ailing. Happy accidents give the film a surrealist air—two donkeys charge into frame to mate, a concerned camel stalks the makeshift embankment that's carrying her son. In that sense, *Tulpan* is a glorious patchwork,

a synthesis of found, film, and novel construction that miraculously joins the sublime to the ridiculous.

Natural performances add to the realism, and though the cast are largely non-professional, Dovmontov has the confidence to shoot a series of striking and sensitive close-ups under the periscope. For all that life on the steppe is harsh, it is also humane as a delicate scene in which the family comb each other's hair shows. Special mention deserves to go to Berke Turganbayev as a tractor driver obsessed with Honey M's *Rovers of Babylon*. Despite owning the only form of motorized transport for miles, it is that song, rather than the machine itself that symbolizes the poignant, impossible dream of escape.

And yet Ashbat will abide—because that is what life demands, and those demands must be answered. In the film's most remarkable scene, Ashbat helps a sheep give birth over a single 10-minute take. Beyond metaphor and meditation, this scene is a profoundly simple statement about the facts of life in the desert. There may not be much place for hope, but there is an entire land of beauty if you're prepared to look. **Matt Buchanan**

Outtakes In a recently released feature, a girl is nice. Let's hope it has something to say. **D**

Equipment A camera and funny darts. **D**

In the past In the desert, look for the director and his first director to find an audience. **D**



UNMADE BEDS

REVIEW
by David Karger

UNMADE BEDS
Directed by Alex de la Iglesia
Cast: Ana Belén, Juan Luis
Bordaberry, María Valverde

In his debut feature, *Glas*, Alex de la Iglesia presented an often raw and uncompromising examination of teenage life in Argentina. In *Unmade Beds* he continues to pursue his interest in the lives of young people, with an eye to exploring a generation that is increasingly becoming dispossessed from both literal and national connections.

Ad (Fernando Tielve) arrives in Britain to search for his long lost father. Along the way he becomes involved with Mike (Gido Goldberg) and Hannah (Kate Winslet), whose bohemian lifestyle leads to a world of exciting encounters, temporary homes, and many hangovers.

ME AND ORSON WELLES

REVIEW
by David Karger
UNMADE BEDS
Directed by Alex de la Iglesia
Cast: Ana Belén, Juan Luis
Bordaberry, María Valverde

REVIEW
by David Karger

Cleverly employing the fluid self-consciousness of the theatre world into which it offers us a glimpse, *Me and Orson Welles* examines inseparable gems.

Richard Linklater's coming-of-age comedy romance – based on Robert Kaplow's historical fiction novel – follows one extraordinary week in the life of teenage student Richard (Zach Efron). Plucked from the street by director Orson Welles (Christian McKay) to play a minor role in his notorious 1937 Mercury Theatre production of *Julius Caesar*, Richard is thrust into the exciting, unpredictable whirlwind of Broadway. The result is a heady baptism of life that puffers romance, heartbreak, and the early buds of manhood.



Meanwhile, Vera (Elizaveta Pongolt) tries to recapture a failed relationship with the delightfully maimed X-Ray Man (Michael Hummel) by using Polaroid pictures. Soon Vera and Ad will discover each other in this world of random meetings.

In some ways *Unmade Beds* harks back to the Swinging London films of the '60s, its inventing the city as the ultimate in urban cool. It's a place where the drink flows freely, new people are always around the corner and responsibility is rarely a word in the dictionary.

De la Iglesia employs a free-wheeling narrative with dreamlike sequences. The roughie atmosphere takes precedence over any clear through line, meaning that the film can sometimes prove to be a bit of a mess. But it is all done with such exuberance and enthusiasm that you learn to love its disregard. Pongolt and Tielve manage to engage in their roles, with the rest of the cast clearly having a lot of fun.

Certainly it is refreshing to see a film about youth that doesn't

revert to the clichés of drug abuse gone wrong. While a lack of narrative thrust can render it a little too loose for its own good, *Unmade Beds* still manages to charm and entice. **Laurence Bayne**

Autopilot: De la Iglesia facilitates his laid-back energy by adopting his follow-up. **B**

Enjoyment: The film sets up a world that proves fun to inhabit and the soundtrack is great. **B**

To Be Picked: As a typical celebration of contemporary youth. **D**



From a wide-eyed Richard, where desire for fame is rewarded with a one-line stage part-time, to an aspiring writer who dreams of publication in *The New Yorker*, to a precociously talented Orson Welles on the cusp of greatness. Linklater's film suggests a nostalgic commitment to the materiality of the American Dream.

Firmly locating opportunity and reward in the realm of the metropolis, *Me and Orson Welles* hints at an impatience with the apparent limitations of the provincial, represented here by

the stifling confines of Richard's classroom walls. For Richard, it is only amid the flurry of the city that the lines of *Julius Caesar* will finally come to life.

The narrative idealism of Linklater's film sits in happy support with the spirit of prosperity that took hold of 1930s America. But his optimism reduces even the film's darker moments with a saccharine kiss: That Richard's love interest, Sonja (Claire Danes), effectively prostitutes herself by sleeping with influential directors to advance her career, for example, is a lesson he

accepts with floating compliance. It is a dispiriting reality that the audience is not asked to question. This ironic narrowness makes for an easy and enjoyable ride but the result is a film that is disappointingly short on human depth. **Karina Piccinini**

Autopilot: *Me and Orson Welles* is a tad out of sync with its audience. **D**

Enjoyment: Superbly acted, quick wit and the performance is great. **B**

To Be Picked: Directed but not acted. **D**

PAPER HEART

MOVIE
Available 12

THE INFLUENCE
LARRY: 3.5 / 5
JAMES: 4.5 / 5

Nicholas Jarek's *Paper Heart* is a strange collection. Set up like a run-of-the-mill doc, filmmaker Nick (actually played on screen by actor Jake M Johnson, the first clue that all is not as it seems) introduces us to Chinese-American comedienne Charlyne Yi. Yi is cute and peppy but despite her upbeat outlook she firmly believes that she will never find true love.

Accordingly, she and Nick travel across America interviewing various ordinary people – from childhood sweethearts celebrating 50-plus years of marriage to a young couple on their wedding day – about the secrets behind lasting love. And then she meets actor Michael Cera. His attraction



to her is manifestly apparent whereas the likesome time to come around to his glib charms. But sure enough a relationship develops – all documented by Nick's unblinking camera.

Whether you view it as a clever and insightful treatise on the indefinable nature of true love or a lightweight rom-com mockumentary hybrid, there's no denying *Paper Heart* is good natured charm. Once you get your head around the conceit that most of it is scripted, you can settle back and

appreciate that its study of romance is based on universal truths (hecked, Cera and Yi had been dating for some time in real life when they made the film).

The film is clearly a piece of extended performance art from the creative mind of Yi – a cine-essay on the clichés and forced feelings that we so often mistake for romance. The sell that she is portraying on screen is just one facet of her personality distilled down to a childlike innocence underlined by her use of paper

crafts to act out the various tales of love, and less she lies in along her journey. Like Yi herself, the film may seem at times self-indulgent in its outlook, but it is also honest and entertaining. **Nikko Broughan**

Anticipation: Is it a documentary? Is it a comedy? But who's to tell? Charlyne Yi! **2**

Engagement: It's a bit like just two people. And he's just a guy. **1**

In Disguise: Once he's done it's a little bit like he's just a guy. **1**

THE INFORMANT!

MOVIE
Available 12

THE INFLUENCE
LARRY: 3.5 / 5
JAMES: 4.5 / 5

Price-fixing in the agro-business may not seem like an obvious topic for a black comedy, but *The Informant!* is a definite reason to turn for Steven Soderbergh. Matt Damon plays Mark



Whitacre, a director at Midwestern agricultural firm ADM who doesn't so much blow the whistle as play the entire second section on the shady goings-on at the upper levels of his firm. Unfortunately the FBI agent assigned to the case (Scott Bakula) doesn't realize what's really going on with Whitacre until it's far too late.

To say any movie would run one of the film's chief joys, which is showing the FBI's growing awareness of Whitacre's unlikability as the plot thickens. Based on a true story, *The Informant!* slips from country to country and boardrooms

to boardrooms in a narrative that would be incomprehensible in lower hands.

The film's main focus is Whitacre himself – a deluded fantasist who, whether fiddling with his wind-tipped livelihood during a business meeting or going a dodgy account of his journey into the office to his hidden newspaper, cuts a dangerously ironic, self-obsessed figure. Big laughs come from the film's repeated tendency of fading out from the action and instead leaning in on the house's non sequiturs running

through Whitacre's head, mixing in everything from polar bears to Japanese vending machines.

Soderbergh keeps things light-hearted even when the narrative turns dark in the film's final third, playing up the comedy with some well-observed period touches and a pretty score from Mason Hartsch.

But much of the credit for *The Informant!*'s success should be given to Damon. Chubby (weighed) and sporting a goofy pencil moustache, the actor catches Whitacre's mixture of naivety and self-importance to perfection. After the smug-faced

braven of the *Glenn* trilogy, it's easy to forget that Damon is a talented character actor. *The Informant!* might be feather light, but it's no less credit that this is one of the most enjoyable films in months. **Dean Stewart**

Anticipation: Looks like a comic version of *The Invention*. Could be funny. **1**

Engagement: Not how engaging anyone might think could be this much fun? **1**

In Disguise: A great performance by Damon. Gets the technical stuff in the box. **1**

GLORIOUS 39

REVIEW
by **David K...**

WATCH IT *Unmissable*
REASON *It's a masterpiece of the 21st century*

Stephen Polonski holds a seemingly unreachable place in British TV. But beneath the bar that BBC budgets can muster lies some sly plotting and chameleonic Hausman to film could pose a long-deferred reality check.

Set on the bank of World War II but framed by a present-day archival narrative, starring Pamela Gera and June Kemp and centered on an upper crust family (headed by a politically involved patriarch and largely absent, gardening-obsessed mother) idling around their vast country pile, the ghost of *House of Commons* looms precariously large over *Glorious 39*.

Such parallels mostly just make you wish you were watching the



better of the two films – though maybe they're intended to show us off the screen. That said, you'd have to have officious blindness not to sense that something fishy is up as soon as Bill Nighy's Alexander Keynes appears, acting with far too much crookedly placed paternal benevolence not to be a Gaele A. psycho. The eldest Keynes child, Anne (Gera), is slow to catch on, but after finding a record in an outburst that plays government secrets, she begins to sense that all is not well.

The increasingly camp air of menace is actually pretty enjoyable and the conspiracy Anne finds herself at the heart of – involving an ultra-conservative British elite desperate to preserve the status quo at any cost – is an interesting spin on post-war Appeasement policy.

Moving on to this historical grey area makes a change from patriotic portraits of war-time Britain, and while Polonski's tale is clearly unapologetic in its telling (invasive while war remains uncertain, the world and its inhabitants are hushed

in moving, restrained colors and a pellucid glow. When the stage set of reality has been stripped back, "It's like living on the moon," as one character says, suddenly reflected in the chilling blue light like a corpse. *Sophie Lewis*

Anticipation: BBC, period drama-to-drama **1**

Clapnet: Party party will start – with a hint of the redoubt **2**

In Rehearsal: Unlikely to have anyone meeting the history books but enjoyable enough **3**

HARRY BROWN

WATCH IT *For the*
REASON *It's a masterpiece of the 21st century*

REVIEW
by **David K...**

Harry Brown (Michael Caine) lives alone on an estate swarming with teens trained up like mini gangsters. Not even the pub where he plays chess with old chess Leonard (David Bradley) is safe – even there, the blighters parade illegal substances in blinding daylight. Oh, the youth of today.

And things are about to get worse. "I'm scared all the time," whimpers Leonard, before he is hacked to death in the nearby underpass. Asked by DI Farnsworth (Brendan Monaghan) if his friend had expressed any concerns, Harry shrugs. "Just kids," he gruffs like new, bearing with a blistering snarl of purpose. Harry has a plan afoot with his own artillery, he is determined to clean the riff-raff off the estate no matter what the cost.



Make no bones about it: this tale of vigilante vengeance is Mean To Shock. Blasting out of the starting gate with a dizzying, phone-moaned attack on a young mother and culminating in a violent orgy of blood and fire, director Daniel Barber shoves it all up there on screen, unapologetic and fiercely in your face.

The messaging may be as subtle as a kick in the teeth, but Harry Brown isn't really concerned with realism. This is a horror movie vision of a very possible future, where the values of yesterday have

been crumpled over by an ASBO uprising. The cartoon violence is indeed shocking, but in a hilarious way. And the sensationalism extends to the film's troublesome terms, brazen, amoralistic vagaries dwarfed in ridiculousness-only by a grotesque, scamed drug dealer. The police, by contrast, are well-meaning, so-called local.

Came, at least, in *Harry Brown*. Playing Harry like a retired Jack Carter, he brings much-needed pathos to the film's local paralyzing, and solves its rough edges with some dark comedy.

But there's always that nagging feeling that Barber could have forged a far more affecting film by employing a defter touch. As it is, *Harry Brown*'s social commentary is drowned out by a scatters of bullets and profanity. *Josh Winkler*

Anticipation: Revenge of the DVD/DVD to the rescue **1**

Clapnet: It's bloody and brutal, and it's over the top as anything by Quentin Tarantino **2**

In Rehearsal: *Clay Aiken*'s mean older brother, but his kick is wider than his face **3**



THE WHITE RIBBON

WINNER OF THE GOLDEN GLOBE FOR BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM

FIJIN
Release 11



Winning the Palme d'Or at Cannes is a decidedly mixed blessing. For all the films that go on to win other major awards and prove the international manna of — Roman Polanski's *The Piano*, Jane Campion's *The Piano* — there are those that remain in arthouse purgatory like the Gardiner, Jeremy Liljgren or Nora Moore's *The Secret Room*. The anti-religious sentiment of Michael Haneke's latest film, which won the award earlier this year, may well be like in the latter category. Let us hope not, for *The White Ribbon* is the Austrian director's most ambitious and most accessible film to date.

Haneke's cool streak, expressed so violently in both the original and his Hollywood remake of *Battle Royale*, is tempered here in favour of a claustrophobic atmosphere of oppression. The year is 1913. In a rural German village and

overshadowed by a feudal landlord, the small Protestant community is rocked by a series of unexplained events with more violence than the last. As the townspeople slowly turn in on themselves, a young schoolteacher begins to suspect that his pupils may not be as innocent as they seem.

If you've ever seen a Haneke film, you'll know better than to expect a satisfying resolution to the viciousness he sets up, but this film comes closer to it than any of his others. In the first lines of the film, the narrator solemnly states that the events we are about to see "might clarify some things that happened in this country." On a simplistic level we are seeing the seeds of Nazism being sown, but that diminishes the scope of Haneke's intentions. This film is about how all communities ruled by religious repression

are doomed to self-destruct. The deeply conservative point (played with terrifying severity by Rainer Kasiene) is the closest this film has to a villain, a man whose discipline and order ends up corrupting more than it inspires.

Haneke has said that *The White Ribbon* is a film about the room of evil, and it supposes that it most resembles a horror film. The painterly black and white cinematography and the pervasive feeling of menace makes this a kind of *Village of the Damned* for the cerebral set.

Which is not to say it's an entirely dark film. There are moments of sweetness, particularly in the schoolteacher's shy, tantalising coyness of the landlord's niece, that show Haneke is not simply a gloom merchant. But that streak of cruelty is not completely absent: a simple scene showing the doctor

Oliver Bock) giving his mistress (Gisela Lohrer) is a masterpiece in explicit abuse all the more shocking for being delivered with emotion-free detachment.

Stylistically and thematically *The White Ribbon* shows a director in full control of his form. From the meticulous composition of his frames to the subtle sequencing of his scenes, Haneke is now at the height of his powers. Thus a complete work of cinema, as once engaging and ingenious. **Dan Snierson**

Anticipation As a well-winning period film directed by a European master, why wouldn't you be excited? **B**

Engaged Have you got a thought but can't put it into words? Why wouldn't you? **B**

In Retrospect They will tell if it's Haneke's masterpiece, but it is certainly one of the finest films of the year. **B**

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Screen Epiphanies

Filmmakers on the films that inspired them

Geoffrey Macnab



"It's like art - in one sense, you discover things gradually, but actually, things suddenly being there can be a revelation. One thing was certain - I knew I wanted to make films."

- Mike Leigh

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LYNN SHELTON: NOT FAKING IT INTERVIEW BY SOPHIE IVAN

FILMOGRAPHY LYNN SHELTON

Wings (1996)

Is She or Is She Not? (2001)

Is It the Job? (2002)

Two straight men decide to make a porn film in which they'll have sex together. And the film about their film is called *Humpday*. Love this up against the likes of *The 40 Year Old Virgin*, *The Hot Chick* and *Knocked Up* and any discerning viewer's preconception would urge them to leave *Humpday* bestriding on the shelf.

Best new judge a movie by its cover, then, or its marketing appeal – because *Humpday* is anything but subtle. And its director, Lynn Shelton, is no pretender to Judd Apatow's throne. Although, given that *Humpday* is a US film about a close friendship between two beer-belting thirty-something men, with an 'upright' wife napping on the periphery, and the bromantic competence are inevitable.

Shelton's film is both diplomatic and well-rehearsed: "Well, I really like her [Apatow] a lot. But I just think we're doing different things. At least, with *Humpday*, I was trying to do something different than I've seen him do... For the most part he's trying to make a comedy and will often have slapstick humour, and you go and you're expecting to laugh. And that was not what I meant to do with *Humpday*," Shelton insists.

Early on at the most laugh-out-loud cinematic offerings of recent years, there is another contradiction to wrestle with: *Humpday* is, according to its creator, an accidental comedy. Well, sort of. I know there would be opportunity for humour, but all of my film have both drama and humour, and I really feel a deep connection between the two," Shelton explains. "So the laughter, I hope, is coming from a place where the audience is connecting to the characters, recognizing situations. It's funny because it's true, basically. We're never playing for jokes, we were always playing everything dead serious – really, really straight. Does that make sense?"

It makes perfect sense, it's just that the film's tone captures so acutely (and hilariously) the insecurities and hypocrisies of a precise social demographic – relatively young, educated, early, Western liberalists prone to repeat gay years and occasional pot-smoking – it's hard to believe that it wasn't meticulously planned and scripted down to the finest detail. Its texture on the edge of being heavily reined-in, self-regarding and angry, but somehow escapes these pitfalls. It opened this year's Sundance, won the Sundance Special Jury Prize for the Spirit of Independence, has a screening soon featuring two clips of some famous music, it's got left festivals and stars that go from *Sex & Drugs* to *Playboy* to further performance from James Franco – all of it comes with credit about the adjective 'quirky', indie and 'quirky', however like a trio of unbecomingly gay godmothers.

So how did Shelton navigate such playful waters without ending up with a film that was, far west of more tactful words, corned and stinky? "When I came to think [Duplatis, who stars as Buddy No. 1, Ben] and then he came to Josh and we invited Josh in, none of us thought this movie would work, and they in particular were very sceptical," she says. "Again,

none of us wanted to make a broad farce – we really only wanted to do this if we could take up the challenge of making a completely believable film and we just didn't see how that could play out. I think it's that high degree of realism which makes it ultimately work because we were always an high alert for these false notes."

Shelton's third feature seems a rare example of how a handful of strong roles, a clear directorial vision and a not-slight script can be the recipe for great drama, regardless of the shattering dimensions of the budget. Secret, wrong again, when according to her, all of the dialogue was improvised as was the final, hilarious, well-they-didn't-they scene. "We were shooting the last scene, we didn't know what was going to happen – it was the most purely improvised writing because we wanted to keep the whole thing really genuine, and very authentic. It was the only film we were interested in making. So we thought the whole film would benefit from not knowing what was going to happen at the end because we'd have that dynamic quality of not really sitting for the pre-determined end, but really having it always be this big question mark. When we got in that room it was really tense."

For a self-proclaimed 'control freak' – apparently more so than your average director, once Shelton spent the first 10 years of her filmmaking career "doing literally everything" (based by her background as an editor) – such open windows must have represented a sizeable leap. "You know, it's always a leap at least, every piece of work is a leap at both and I don't think anyone's ever taking it necessarily going to be a guarantee of a great film." Which more, as Shelton progressively points out, the high-risk concept and approach were associated with a liberal, practical set-up. "It hadn't worked it would have died a quiet little death in Seattle and nobody would have lost millions of dollars," she admits. "You know, it's the only way you can make a piece of work like this – pick up a camera and gather your friends together and get them involved."

The headline-grabbing scenario of *Humpday*, like its title, is a MacGuffin – though perhaps one which might become when it comes to hooking in the straight male audiences for whom Shelton says she made the film; an irony not lost on her. "It was looking for a premise that I hoped would offer interesting territory to explore, but I wasn't interested in trying to say a particular thing, really." What she was interested in, Shelton says, was "talking to the community, as opposed to just regurgitating shit that you've seen before, or just not really saying anything at all. I definitely did want to make sure that there were things that happened that would make you think, or make you remember your own life, or reconsiderative. It just [was] making work that actually inspires good after dinner conversation." No doubt *Humpday* will be the wheels of many a gathering in months to come.

Check out the full interview online in the week of the film's release

HUMPDAY

THE
HUMOR

SHOCKER
COMEDY
STARRING BEN DEPLASE
AND ANDREW CLAPHAM



It's been a decade since Ben (Mark DePlase) and Andrew (Clapham Leveney) were the bad boys of their college campus. Ben has settled down and found a steady job, a loving wife and a side-suburban home in Seattle. Andrew took the alternative route as a vagabond artist, inventing the globe and string his three farms and adoptions.

When Andrew shows up unannounced on Ben's doorstep in Los, they easily fall back into their old dynamic of macho one-upmanship. Late into the night at a bachelor party, the two find themselves locked in a mutual dare to enter an amateur porn contest together. But what kind of boundary-breaking, envelope-pushing, porn-for-two straight men make? Amidst the booze, teasing and bluster one sides stands out—they'll fuck each other—in earnest. A single obstacle lays the obstacles and ironic loop into the great unknown, who will tell Ben's wife Anna (Alycia Debnar-Coe)?

On paper a cross between boozily lost boy comedy and a Judd Apatow wet dream, *Humpday* is actually an intelligent, perceptive and gently comic look at the boundaries of sexual identity and how fluid or rigid those boundaries might be.

The third feature from sci-fi director Lynn Shelton (*Before*) also appears in an acting role; the film proved a sensation at Sundance and Edinburgh, and has been called up as one of the year's must-see U.S. indie flicks. Out of Shelton's door to collocation with DePlase, who was originally scheduled to play Andrew, *Humpday* was shepherded from script through to production in an extremely organic fashion, with all the principle cast being asked to contribute more than just performances to the project.

Lending a symmetrical authenticity and informed intimacy to the character comedy, the decision to script

the high-concept narrative with a deliberately underplayed, naturalistic aesthetic also pays dividends in regard to creating a sense of believability concerning the situation that slowly unfolds before our eyes. Dialogue and small gestures become imbued with added nuances and hidden import, and from a thrilly low-end promise themes such as the need to take stock of where we are in contrast to where we'd like to be in our lives are subtly and skillfully evoked.

A springboard from which Shelton also explores heterosexual apathy to homosexuality, with both Ben and Andrew (both well played by DePlase and Leveney respectively) slowly realizing that they are nowhere near as open-minded in this regard as they would like to imagine. *Humpday* is also pretty much on the money in its look at domesticity and the myth of perpetual bliss. The sex in the hole in this regard is the character of Anna, a woman who thinks nothing

of avoiding her overly involved, barely conscious husband following a better now because she doesn't want to ruin a day of vacation.

Describing himself as "a close observer of the emotional life of people" and as being "particularly compelled by characters who fervently want to connect with each other but who struggle deeply to do so," Shelton has been tapped as an extremely adept chronicler of the associations between men. It's fair to say that the director is good on relationships, period. Jason Wood

Adaptation: Two straight men compete to lose a bet with one other in order to be in the right but don't handle things like a mature American comedy. **D**

Support: So much credit that the film is a slightly less cynical and slightly and sometimes. **A**

In *Humpday*: Lynn Shelton's film was inspired by a transsexual relationship. This chick is hilarious. **D**



THE HORSEMAN

GRADE
A- (watch it)

WRITER/DIRECTOR John Hurler
Starring: Peter Marshall, Peter Marshall, Peter Marshall

9

NO AGES
Grade: A-

WRITER/DIRECTOR John Hurler
Starring: Peter Marshall, Peter Marshall

When a grieving father is anonymously sent a porn tape starring his dead daughter, he turns down those involved with the sole intention of taking them away. The result is a strange, sometimes serious and generally based around an against the hot and grimy Queensland environment. In the film's focus, Peter Marshall is thoroughly convincing as the self-harming father who, in between his bouts of sadistic violence, manages to forge a friendship with teenage hitchhiker Alice (Caroline Marchant). Not apart from this, *The Horseman* ignores any deeper moral questions to follow an ugly linear path of violence, suffering and... more violence. But ultimately it's not the actual content that is disturbing, more the motivation of writer and director Steven Kastrup: in making such a scarring film. **Ed Andrews**

Just what, exactly, does it take to make a "visionary" these days? For 9 director Shane Acker a pair of animated shorts has been deemed sufficient: with both *Tin* (Hurler) and *Tower* (Belenzon) playing in as producers on his feature debut. Which is a solid enough GG situation about a gang of post-apocalyptic rag doll commandos charged with returning order to a world that was itself again in a war between man and machine. Despite a ragged steampunk aesthetic and some sophisticated touches (darker subplots with Wehrmacht helmets there are too many elements borrowed from other better sci-fi films, while the influence of Russian chance Belenzon can be felt in the film's preference of style over substance). **Matt Richman**



DISGRACE

GRADE
A- (watch it)

WRITER/DIRECTOR John Hurler
Starring: Peter Marshall, Peter Marshall

9

NO AGES
Grade: A-

WRITER/DIRECTOR John Hurler
Starring: Peter Marshall, Peter Marshall

South African poetry professor David Lurie (John Malkovich) is in the midst of a crisis of morality. After abusing his position to sleep with a female student, he is professionally disgraced, held to resignation and left alone save for his estranged daughter whose farm he relocates to. Upon returning home one day Lurie and his daughter are attacked - he is left humiliated and incapacitated while his daughter is brutally raped. As tensions flare between Lurie and his daughter's assistant, racial anxiety momentarily transcends the troubled father-daughter dynamic, but the film's firing, close to both redemptive and machine. This disquieting drama serves as a platform for Malkovich, whose elegant performance draws you in with great compassion. **Adam Woodward**

In 1965, disgraced writer John Hurler wrote a script, *Under*, about a prison inmate driven to madness by his wife's presumed affairs. During production, Hurler disappeared into his own dreams and nightmares, experimenting with new effects and mind-warping imagery. Eventually, the director suffered a heart attack, and the film was abandoned. This is the story that his widow tells, told to director Serge Bruckner, before giving him access to the surviving raw footage. Bruckner has used the material to piece together an enthralling documentary about a lost masterpiece: a synthesis of Hurler's classic psychosis and post-1960s style. It deserves to be the last word on an enigmatic film. **Matt Richman**



LAW ABIDING CITIZEN

CRITIC'S CHOICE
Best Movie

CRITIC'S CHOICE
Best Actor: Gerard Butler

F Gary Gray's latest action-thriller kicks off with a bang as Clyde Shelton's (Gerard Butler) home is invaded by thugs who kill his wife and daughter in a brutal and slow-mo attack. Ten years after one of the murders makes a deal with the corrupt Philadelphia district attorney Nick Rice (Clayne Purdy), all of those involved in the case start to get regrettably banged off. Money and justice are the two main themes, but since this is Hollywood they take a back seat to a series of elaborate deaths concocted while Shelton is in police custody. Although the format and setups resemble a horror rather than a courtroom farce and slightly run on for actors towards the end, the film doesn't take itself too seriously and there are enough cool deaths and twists to entertain despite the ridiculous premise. **Lawrence Salt**



TALES FROM THE GOLDEN AGE

CRITIC'S CHOICE
Best Movie

CRITIC'S CHOICE
Best Actor: Nicolas Cage

Two words to strike fear into the heart of the average movie fan: postmodern film. Two words to inspire some hope: Nicolas Cage. *Tales From The Golden Age* began life as a solo project for the Rainier 1 Or winner in which he planned to write and direct a fictional feature based on real-life urban legends from Bensons, a conman's era under the rule of Nicolas Cage. Instead, in a move that the collective genre would have applauded, he invited four of Bensons's most promising young filmmakers to join him. The result is a picture of Bensons that is at once bleak but strangely nostalgic. What shines through is the proud spirit of the Bensons people, who found ways to endure in a system that seemed from the comically ineffective to the starkly inhuman. **Mark Kischinevsky**



THE MEN WHO STARE AT GOATS

CRITIC'S CHOICE
Best Movie

CRITIC'S CHOICE
Best Actor: Rob Wilton

Any comedy of errors, *The Men Who Stare at Goats* may be a movie that involves war, but it's not a war movie. It reveals a sideways glance at a top-secret US military division that spent much of the 70s managing a horde of psychic super-soldiers. And yes, that involved staring at goats. George Clooney is the ex-military soldier tasked on a mysterious mission by reporter Rob Wilton (Damon McGarry), who wants to write a story on the Iraq war to prove to his wife that he's not a waste of space. Tying in real-life footage of Iraq combat and George Bush, *Goats* usually appears to be digging at the ribs of the Bush administration, but it also quickly turns more farcical than barbed, firing on just the right side of silliness, in combination of slapstick and off-the-cuff sitcom nearly has the right ratio. **Josh Wussing**



WELCOME

CRITIC'S CHOICE
Best Movie

CRITIC'S CHOICE
Best Actor: Vincent Lindon

Philippe Liasson's latest film is an emotional and intriguing mix of social and personal drama that echoes some of the more low-key work of Ken Loach. Like Loach, the issues of immigration and prejudice are very much at the heart of the film, exposing the hypocrisy and ill-considered arguments levelled against those whose only wish is to escape danger and be with their loved ones. But the film also works as an interesting examination of masculinity, with the story of Bilal (Philippe Ayeddi), a young Kurdish boy determined to join his girlfriend who has emigrated to the UK, juxtaposed with Simon (Vincent Lindon), a swimming instructor in the midst of a divorce. Liasson's direction is functional, but it's Lindon's and Ayeddi's chemistry that really holds the interest. **Laurence Boyce**

Chapter five is
the first of
the five in which
the book is
divided into
five parts
in its secondary
characterising
forms

THE

BACK SECTION



26



A FISTFUL OF

LEONE

TO COMMEMORATE THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF SERGIO LEONE, THE ROME FILM FESTIVAL HELD A UNIQUE EXHIBITION: *SERGIO LEONE: A LOOK AT THE UNKNOWN*. IT FEATURED A SERIES OF ARCHIVE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE DIRECTOR AND HIS WORK, THE BEST OF WHICH WE'VE REPRINTED EXCLUSIVELY HERE.

Sergio Leone was born in Rome on January 3, 1929, and passed away on the evening of April 30, 1989, while watching Fabrizio Wexler's *I Due i Wann-It-Gie*. His body of work includes not just some of the greatest westerns of all time — *A Fistful of Dollars*, *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly* — and his seminal *Once Upon a Time in the West* — but represents a foundation stone of modern American mythology.

SECRETS OF THE SET 1 2 3

THE LEGENDARY DIRECTOR, LEONE, THEN, WAS THE IDEAL COLLABORATOR FOR AN AMERICAN COMEDY ON absolute set, with little chance to mishear.

MDUNT DLYMPUS: GODS AND GODDESSES 4

For a young boy raised in the Trastevere neighborhood of Rome, the Wild West was the realm of his native mythology. He was a little bit of a cowboy, but not really, but equally not.

LEONE ON SET 5

Among several on-camera roles, Leone played a role that was both director and actor. In *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, Leone had a deep knowledge of the film set.



A photograph of Leone on set, from the 1968 film *A Fistful of Dollars*.

2



Leonid interviews Claude Gaudin on the set of *Dune* (1964). *Dune in the West* 1968

3



Leonid Brezhnev with a child on the set of *Dune* (1964). *Dune in the West* 1968

4



Charles Bronson on the set of the film *Dune* (1964). *Dune in the West* 1968

5



Scene from the film *Dune* (1964). *Dune in the West* 1968



Le Dink

PADDY CONSIDINE SPEAKS

BEST KNOWN FOR HIS WORK WITH SEAN MEADOWS, PADDY CONSIDINE IS ACTUALLY HUNTER'S MOST CHARISMATIC CONTEMPORARY ACTOR. HIS LATEST COLLABORATION WITH MEADOWS, LE DINK, IS A STUNNING LO-FI COMEDY IMPROVED ACROSS THE COURSE OF FIVE DAYS, A SLURP INTO THE WORLD OF A SELF-DELUSIONED ROADIE. THE FILM TAPS INTO CONSIDINE'S LONG HISTORY AS A MISOGYNIST DINK IS OUT NOW ON DVD WHILE HIS GANG BRING THE LOW RELEASES ITS FIRST EP ONLY WILL AND YOU OF YOUR SETS ON NOVEMBER 9 ON COLUMBIA TRISTAR.

EDLIE: How're you, Paddy?

CONSIDINE: Fucking hell, it's shoddy!

EDLIE: You do look robust recently.

CONSIDINE: Yeah. Tired. Shoveling ropes at well.

EDLIE: Shoveling your new first cup-killer thriller Slit? How's that going?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, alright mate.

EDLIE: And that's with Jason "Bastard" White in it, working with him?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, alright mate. What do you want to talk about?

EDLIE: Well, Le Dink is damn alright!

CONSIDINE: Yeah. Ha. Sorry mate. I've fucking shitted. Can't get my brain going. I'll have more wear it's past midnight right and shit. And thing these meetings is the day. The other day I had it shot for \$4,000. It's all for me now.

EDLIE: On you think this business can mean with your head?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, this business does shit in your head. It's a miserable profession. It's unshit.

EDLIE: But you make playing Le Dink look easy. What?

CONSIDINE: That's the big misconception. When I put the script on, it's just like Dink takes over. Sometimes you just have to give yourself over and stop thinking if it's only good or not and just be. Le Dink. Yeah, it's a people, but to say it's easy work would undermine that it's tremendously hard to do that. It might be a talent, but it's a hard work.

EDLIE: When you're playing a character, do you see Paddy to someone else?

CONSIDINE: Yeah, definitely. Some guys have to go into a corner and smash their head off a wall. But then I've found to just have a really fast quiet fucking switch. That's it. And that's then.

EDLIE: Dead Men's Shoes is one of our favorites. Was that the way it worked with that character?

CONSIDINE: The way I was playing that guy, I was actually really fucking relaxed. If you look at the

DVD extra, we're tearing around. I've got an ass, playing guitar with it. There was some. In there.

EDLIE: You don't believe in Method acting?

CONSIDINE: Advice like to be Method actors. Consider them your quite interesting. But there's a lot of work going on. Stay away from that guy because he's in character... I think it's a load of old fucking rubbish. To be honest, I think people give their greatest performance when they're relaxed and they know how to switch on and off. All the fucking greats most people like Jack Nicholson.

EDLIE: So you struggle with acting?

CONSIDINE: You know, when I tell you this story - I've been saying for years I've got to fucking get out. Yeah, man. Because I like impressed with it. But there was always a part of me that's like, you haven't done your best stuff yet. Because there's a whole other side of fucking acting that I have never known about yet. I'm going, "Why can't I do that?"

EDLIE: Is there a performance you're most proud of?

CONSIDINE: No, no. Not me. To be honest with you, mate, I can appreciate any people like Dead Men's Shoes. I can see it. But it's hard to appreciate it myself. And that's why I think I've got to learn to do it a bit harder for me to accept that anything's good. But I'm starting to get better at it. It's coming to believe people like yourself when you say it's good. I appreciate that. Thank you. Slit is the best!



PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY WOODHEAD

BROTHERS

WITH GOOD FRIENDS PABLO AND ANDRÉS, GARCÍA SANCHEZ, BECARRIL AND BRUGO LUNA TURN THEIR FILMS, FRIENDSHIP AND WILLY CINEMA SHOWBUNT BE PERSONAL AND

in ARMS

WILLIS: You become close friends while filming the same movie—El Abogado Pito is taking freedom off to pursue some on-screen ideas of his globe. Does Tito and Bruto's sibling rivalry reflect your own natural rivalry otherwise when it comes to success on screen?

Becarril: Actually no. But I will say that in my experience it is when things go well that you realize who your real friends are. It's easy to be around someone who is failing because it doesn't involve any sense of competition. But still saying about true friends being the ones who strike by you when things go bad simply like I hear true friends are the ones who like you enough to stick around even when your success makes them feel inadequate. Diego and I are true friends and no matter no matter of our parts could ever please the other.

Luna: There's definitely a Mexican culture where success is not what always it is, but it's mostly success and has no connection with reality. For me success is subjective. I can be doing a stage play in a house and that can be making a huge movie alongside major Hollywood stars and we can be equally as happy in each other.

WILLIS: Does the fact that you're such close friends make it easier or harder to not a longside each other?

Becarril: Sometimes it's easier sometimes harder. The idea in Pito de Mami, Becarril, for example was very difficult. It's not easy to kiss your best friend.

Luna: It's even more difficult to admit that you like it. But that part has been taking too long.

Becarril: Actually it was so hard to make for Diego because deep down he was wanting it to happen for so long.

Luna: And then we did it and I thought it was crap. Since then has been asking me every day to do it again which is awkward.



Becarril: It is a beautiful story.

Luna: Because I care about your feelings. Our friendship comes first.

WILLIS: (To Pito) It's the best movie to tell me under the banner of your jointly owned production company, Cinema How did Cinema come into being?

Becarril: We took a long time putting Cinema together and it took even longer to develop it to the point where we felt it was fulfilling the role we wanted it to fill. Initially we founded Cinema to help fund Archuleta's documentary film festival that we host around Mexico each year. But it has

become a home for independent filmmaking in Mexico and a place where we can put parties. Mexico and Latin America is a more revealing light than stereotypical Hollywood. It isn't like the world—it isn't even like Mexican cinema—but it does help Mexico make groundbreaking innovative movies and that's exactly what it is there to do.

WILLIS: In the past year's festival, the transformative power of film in changing people's perceptions of Mexico is a large part of what Cinema is all about?

Becarril: Definitely. I remember when I was promoting *Amores Puros* and people kept asking me, "Is Mexico really like that?" It's like watching a New York hip movie and asking if everyone in New York is a politician. Movies should only ever be trying to portray an aspect of a given country if a film tries to tell you what a country is all about then that film is propaganda. In Cinema we're definitely trying to show as many sides of Latin American culture through as many films as possible. Portraying as appropriate cinema allows you to view movies in a very free way.

Luna: I agree. When an audience has preconceptions about a film it stops them from working out who something is moving them so much or why it isn't moving them at all. It's because the market I'm watching a commercial film does that mean that I'm not allowed to feel an emotional attachment to the characters? Am I not allowed to cry when *Border Men* loses his parent? As an audience we're used to protecting ourselves when what we should be doing is putting the opposite. We should approach movies with our eyes closed and then watch them with our eyes wide open. **2013/2014**





PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSICA LEE



RELISTINGS

AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 2

SAMURAI PRINCESS

DIRECTED BY KENJI KAGI 2003
From the FX channel's failed movie genre, *Samurai Girl* is *Princess Samurai Girl* and *Samurai Girl*. Dark, subtle, serene, without instant gratification, *Princess Samurai* is a quiet, subtle, and powerful cinematic work that is a must-see for a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

THE JACQUES TATI COLLECTION

DIRECTED BY JACQUES TATI, 1953-1974
The legend of French comedy director Jacques Tati has been rediscovered with this collection of his most loved films, including *Les Vacances de M. Hulot* and *Les Vacances de M. Hulot*.

SUMMER

DIRECTED BY LEE DEMARCO 2003
Canadian low-budget director Lee Demarco's *Summer* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

THE PAPER WILL BE BLUE

DIRECTED BY RICH MURKIN 2003
The *Paper Will Be Blue* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE

DIRECTED BY CHRIS NIKEN 2000
This *Blood: The Last Vampire* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 9

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2: BATTLE OF THE SMITHSONIAN

DIRECTED BY BARON LEE 2009
The *Night at the Museum 2: Battle of the Smithsonian* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

UN JEU BRUTAL

DIRECTED BY JEAN-CLAUDE ESCOFFIER 1973
After the recent release of *Un Jeu Brutal*, the book collection of Jean Escoffier's *Un Jeu Brutal* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

LISBON STORY

DIRECTED BY NIM WINKLER 1974
A book collection of Nim Winkler's *Lisbon Story* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

DE BRUIT ET DE FUREUR

DIRECTED BY JEAN-CLAUDE ESCOFFIER 1973
This *De Bruit Et De Fureur* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

ARRANGED

DIRECTED BY JAMES GRANT 2009
This *Arranged* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

ECHOES OF HOME

DIRECTED BY STEVE SCHWARTZ 2007
This *Echoes of Home* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 16

THE FILM NOIR COLLECTION

DIRECTED BY JAMES GRANT 2009
This *The Film Noir Collection* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

SOUL POWER

DIRECTED BY JAMES GRANT 2009
This *Soul Power* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

STAR TREK

DIRECTED BY JAMES GRANT 2009
This *Star Trek* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

LONE WOLF AND CUB: THE COMPLETE BOX SET

DIRECTED BY JAMES GRANT 2009
This *Lone Wolf and Cub: The Complete Box Set* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

FOR ALL MANKIND

DIRECTED BY AL BEINGET 1989
This *For All Mankind* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

SUNSHINE CLEANING

DIRECTED BY CHRISTINE JEFFES 2005
This *Sunshine Cleaning* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

THE TERENCE DAVIES COLLECTION

DIRECTED BY TERENCE DAVIES 1970-2000
This *The Terence Davies Collection* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

COCO BEFORE CHANEL

DIRECTED BY ANNE FONTAINE 2009
This *Coco Before Chanel* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

SALMONBERRIES

DIRECTED BY PETER ADLER 1981
This *Salmonberries* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

TERMINATOR SALVATION

DIRECTED BY MIC 2005
This *Terminator Salvation* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 30

EAGLES OVER LONDON

DIRECTED BY ENZO CASTELLANI 1969
This *Eagles Over London* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

AVAILABLE DECEMBER 7

THE HANGOVER

DIRECTED BY TODD PHILLIPS 2009
This *The Hangover* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

MID AUGUST LUNCH

DIRECTED BY EMMETT DILLON 2000
This *Mid August Lunch* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

SEVERED WAYS: THE HORSE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

DIRECTED BY TONY STONE 2007
This *Severed Ways: The Horse Discovery of America* is a quiet, subtle, serene, without instant gratification.

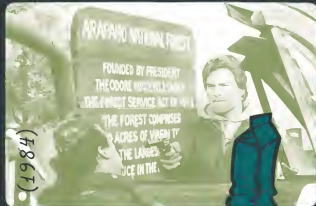
Ex-Rent Hall Parents...

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WRITTEN BY ADAM LEE DAVIES
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OVERVIEW



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 what it's like!
 your best



Order of a world on the brink of
 a 10-year 100th anniversary
 of when it was said that Adolf
 to such great light was born
 to all those who he kept
 behind a shadow for years
 but never looked back at
 his shadow's anniversary. It
 all happened to send a message
 to all who look at
 and the shadow
 became



WORDS BY PAUL FAIRCLOUGH



CAIN'S AWAKENING

LAWRENCE PEARCE'S DIARIES OF A MOVIE INSIDER

Two years ago I came up with an idea for a feature film script. With *Cain's Awakening* I took a *Boomer*-style adventure of a lost protagonist on the hunt for his own identity, and set it in a Biblical Lynch world with feelings of *The Godfather* and David Fincher's passion darkness. The result was a script I'm very proud of and which has had an interesting journey thus far.

For the next six to eight months I was in research mode and spent many hours watching biblical movies, historical concepts, plotting, developing, writing and rewriting until I reached a draft that was ready to start receiving feedback on. For an uncomfortable stage when you send a script out to its early stages to receive constructive criticism, but it is essential to the growth of the story and the strength of the work.

I sent *Cain's Awakening* to fellow writers for their story-based experience, producers for their business-related reaction to the commercial potential and to a few film buff friends for the audience appeal. The feedback was incredibly useful in finding the core themes and storyline, and in adding old characteristics back and softening a plot line. A few months later and I had what I considered a pretty strong script to my hands.



The next steps to the rise of indie filmmakers experience all too often, knocking on the doors of those with the power to make your dreams a reality, or to put it more clearly the ecosystem — producers, investors, and distributors. The overwhelming response was something along the lines of 'What an original! exciting, high-concept yet executed, psychological, anti-father with enormous potential! But yeah, we can't do it.'

After pondering for reasons why it came down to those rejections, I realized I was either grossly off the cinema attached to play the lead. Second, it as the disaster was not yet bankable as the major budget range needed for the movie. And third, no one wanted to be the first to jump aboard. Everyone I spoke to wanted to see someone else already backing the project. Investors wanted a large production company or the best producers, wanted distributors pre-buying cinema territories, already and distributors wanted the film fully financed before negotiating sales. I was in a never a land with what everyone agreed was a hot script but with nothing to show for it.

So I took a radical side step and decided to come back to the film world after *Cain's Awakening* was brought to life through another medium. As



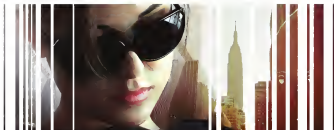
investors who wasn't prepared to fund the returns required for the movie did agree to fund the small amount needed to produce a graphic novel.

Why a graphic novel? Well, it would allow me to direct the story, creating an atmospheric, atmospheric and high quality storyboard before work on the movie began and it would provide all those in the film world with a visual reference to buy into. And a graphic novel could be released independently, reaching an audience and giving us an indication of the story's sheer appeal.

Today, after months of re-developing the world into a comic book, finalizing an artist and letterer and producing the 100-page graphic novel, I am now at the point of re-launching the project into the film industry. However, I have also experienced a change in my approach, having already realized my vision with the graphic novel. I am now more open to the idea of a large studio producing a big name director and missing something very special. Where *Cain's Awakening* works up only time will tell, but if you are the head of development at Universal, feel free to get in touch.

The *Cain's Awakening* graphic novel can be found at: www.bloodandiron.co.uk

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shot slow-burner"

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GRAHAM SAILEY, DAILY EXPRESS



"Jarmusch's latest
is a star-strewn
Antonioni-esque
Bond movie"

★★★★★

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IN CINEMAS DECEMBER 11

chapter six
INCORPORATING
NATURE
into
tracking
release
on the
wildlife
radar



A SINGLE MAN

WICHITA *Jan. 14* **PG-13**

NEWS The debut feature by former *Good Will Hunting* director John Ford, this indie period piece and festival favorite has been snapped up by the Weinstein Co.—as expected, as it features an late of award shortage. In 2010, Colin Firth plays a gay British college professor overcoming the death of his partner in 1959 L.A.

INCEPTION

WICHITA *Dec. 16* **PG-13** **PG-13**

FOOTAGE Although still scheduled in comedy Christopher Nolan's latest now has a release date (July 16, 2010) and a reported \$160-million budget. The trailer doesn't give much away (as for an anti-emotional spillover between men Leonardo DiCaprio and Joseph Gordon-Levitt). Repeat big things from the one

MACHETE

WICHITA *Jan. 14* **PG-13** **PG-13**

CASTING The film begins as a pilot trailer in the 11th edition. The movie Rodriguez collaboration. Rodriguez has swapped into a full-length feature with one of the most bizarre caution room years, featuring Robert De Niro, Steven Seagal, Don Johnson, and it appears set to be followed. Lindsay Lohan stars looking Rodriguez regular Danny Trejo plays the lead role.

THE DANISH GIRL

WICHITA *Jan. 14* **PG-13** **PG-13**

NEWS On The Right One is director Tomas Alfredson. has announced his next project—the man. His story of Danish painter Lina Wiegner the first person to have a sex change to become a woman. Nicole Kidman stars, but Alfredson is looking for a new scene to play her with actor Charles Theron left the production.

YELLOW SUBMARINE

WICHITA *Jan. 14* **PG-13** **PG-13**

NEWS The commercial exploration of the Beatles' mindspace again with news that the Fab Four's much-loved 1968 animated film is to be remade by Disney courtesy of director Robert Zemeckis. Expect less happy, less psychedelic and more understanding news. You can't beat the music, though.

COLLAPSE

WICHITA *Jan. 14* **PG-13** **PG-13**

FOOTAGE From Michael Moore's greatly mispacing. Having in Capetown. A Love Story and hope this Chris Smith's *Collapsing* gets a general release. Screened at TIFF, the pattern of apocalyptic disaster. Michael Rappaport takes in economic, energy and the environment, and is a grown up film of ideas rather than the polemic of an overpowering man-child.

WICHITA

WICHITA *Jan. 14* **PG-13** **PG-13**

NEWS Filming has now begun on the action comedy starring Tim Cruise and Cameron Diaz. The pitch sounds like a cross between *Bad on a Wheel* and *The Bourne Identity* as mysterious spy Cruise does nobody knows Diaz as an international adventure. Paul Giamatti and James Mangold direct.

YOUTH IN REVOLT

WICHITA *Jan. 14* **PG-13** **PG-13**

FOOTAGE Although the trailer might make seem like a sequel to *Superbad*, this Michael Cern vehicle is said to have a sense of an indie movie heart than his Judd Apatow projects. The *Arrested Development* star plays a young man who develops a split personality in order to woo the girl of his dreams. Ray Liotta. Zach Galifianakis and Steve Buscemi add quirky support.

THE ROAD

WRITTEN BY Stephen G. Lee '07

POSTAGE After all the sequels of duels, red-locks and rumpus of an on problems, *The Road* has finally started screening — first in Toronto, then in London. “What is that it’s a faithful and profoundly sad rendering of Cormac McCarthy’s classic story of a man and his son trying to survive in a post-apocalyptic world fraught with danger.”

THE ILLUSIONIST

WRITTEN BY Steve Smith '06

POSTAGE The far 3D released will have enjoyed of Sylvia Chonak a follow up to *The Prince of Belshazzar*, looking slightly less certain, but is less lovingly constructed than the director’s much admired first film. Based on a screenplay by Jacques Tati and set for a permanent release, this should be one of our year’s biggest foreign language films.

THE TIME THAT REMAINS

WRITTEN BY G. Smith '06

POSTAGE Palestinian director Elia Suleiman has made a name for himself with his dry black comedies about the conflict in his native land. This most recent is Suleiman’s most personal too, inspired by his family history from the 1940s war until the present day. Three subtitled clips are now online.

MUTE

WRITTEN BY G. Smith '06

NEWS Though it’s still over a year away from getting anywhere near a cinema, the film concept shows of Duncan Jones, following to the recently mentioned Moon have been circulating on the internet. From the books of J. Jones follows — involving a mute basketball player on a spaceship of passengers — looks to be a dystopian film such as the spirit of *Blade Runner*.



À OERIVA

WRITTEN BY Stephen G. Lee '07

POSTAGE The international order for this Brazilian film is a Portuguese-language role with controversy over its theme (anything that men can't do). Besides reviews in France, a notable one and a real find in newcomer Laura Naves should see *À Oeriva* a French family drama get a UK release.

LONDON FIELDS

WRITTEN BY David Rosenberg '06

NEWS Although the likes of David Rosenberg have been tipped in years past to direct the adaptation of James Aronson's 1980 novel, Ben Hur Michael Williams' efforts are now in the frame to take charge at a stage period by Aronson. Rosenberg is still very much in pre-production, but it's one to watch.

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

WRITTEN BY David Rosenberg '06

LEGACY Playwright David Mervin has reportedly passed a screenplay for Disney inspired by the *Diary of Anne Frank*, telling the story of a Jewish girl who was Jewish and became close friends with her Jewish friends. The film is expected to be released in the House of Mervin and has been put into turnaround — we can only hope this was the light of day.

HEREAFTER

WRITTEN BY David Rosenberg '06

CASTING Matt Damon has been announced as the lead in Clint Eastwood's supernatural thriller produced by Paramount, written by Peter Morgan. Details are thin on the ground beyond Warner Bros. discussion of it being in the top of the Sony Screen. (Screening started in October)

THE CONSPIRATOR

WRITTEN BY David Rosenberg '06

CASTING Robin Wright Penn and James McAvoy have agreed to play respectively a woman accused of plotting the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the soldier who believes she is innocent. After the *Conspirator* leads for Lamb, director Robert Redford needs a hit. Could be a serious potential for the Scottish actor.

THE GREEN HORNET

WRITTEN BY David Rosenberg '06

CASTING Nicolas Cage has been replaced by Hugh Grant as the lead in the *Green Hornet* film. The film is expected to be released in the House of Mervin and has been put into turnaround — we can only hope this was the light of day.

ASHES AND BLOOD

WRITTEN BY David Rosenberg '06

POSTAGE The directorial debut of David French, *Ashes and Blood* has two long clips online with English subtitles. A French drama with dark overtones, the film is expected to be released in the House of Mervin and has been put into turnaround — we can only hope this was the light of day.

RED DAWN

WRITTEN BY David Rosenberg '06

NEWS The untimely death of Patrick Swayze in September gives us a good opportunity to report that *Red Dawn* has begun on the rewrite of his 1984 action vehicle. The original saw a band of teenagers fight a Russian invasion of the US. In the new version, it's a Chinese invasion and we're battling resistance from teenagers who are, of course, just the same. (Screening started in October)

UP IN THE AIR

WIREIMAGE.COM/Steve Delaney

PREVIEW A full-on, low-budget comedy starring director Jason Reitman's latest, which is already getting a healthy second look. From the looks of it, the George Clooney starrer seems to have lost of a badly chosen title than Reitman's previous. Audiences at the London Film Festival will already know the score in advance of the fifth January release.

THE SOCIAL NETWORK

WIREIMAGE.COM/Steve Delaney

CASTING We reported in the last issue that David Fincher had signed up to direct the Facebook story written by Alex Karp and Aaron Sorkin. The latest news is that Aaron Sorkin will play Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg (on Michael Caine like we guessed). Sorry, and Aaron Sorkin will play co-founder Sean Parker.

KICK-ASS

WIREIMAGE.COM/Steve Delaney

PREVIEW Shady-area footage of a comic book premiere can now be seen on YouTube of Matthew Vaughn's forthcoming adaptation of Mark Miller's graphic novel, which is the story of an amateur superhero. Nicolas Cage, Mark Strong, and Christopher Moltisano (who's known as Superman's McGowan) co-star alongside Aaron Johnson.

UNTITLED LIBERACE PROJECT

WIREIMAGE.COM/Steve Delaney

CASTING Plans for an original musical with The Informers? Steven Soderbergh and Matt Damon are to be in on the basis of the closest gay pastor and entertainer. Playing the cheap singer himself is, it is rumored, none other than Michael Douglas, with Damon in the role of his lover. If reports are to be believed, Douglas will even sing his own songs.



A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

WIREIMAGE.COM/Steve Delaney

PREVIEW The good news about the remake, starring Jackie Gleason as Nightmare on Elm Street, is that the newly released trailer suggests the film replicates the darkness of the Wes Craven original rather than the campy spirit of the campy sequel. The bad news? Four weeks. Produced by Michael Bay.

THE A-TEAM

WIREIMAGE.COM/Steve Delaney

CASTING South African actor Sharlto Copley, star of sci-fi thriller In the Company of Men, is reportedly to play Murdock in the big screen version of the 1980s TV show. If true, he will join Liam Neeson as Hannibal, The Wanderer's Bradley Cooper as Pike, and, of course, the original Christopher Quinklan as Tugg Speedman. What's more, Copley is to play a villain. That's a million problems we have to solve.

THE HOBBIT


WIREIMAGE.COM/Steve Delaney

PREVIEW The film adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit is the first of a trilogy of films based on the books. But the production may have a serious stumbling block in the form of financial woes at MGM. The studio needs to spend to ensure that The Hobbit production goes on, but it is reportedly close to bankruptcy.

LOBO

WIREIMAGE.COM/Steve Delaney

CASTING Comic book fans will be up in arms at news the Universal has penciled in none other than Guy Pearce to direct the adaptation of one of DC Comics' lesser known superheroes. The superhero's illegal activities being hunted as yet to be seen, but the smart money has to be on Pearce. Pearce's nuclear nuclear Jason Statham doesn't?



next issue:
carrying the Fire
on sale December 19

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